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NEW TIMES

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A SOVIET WEEKLY OF WORLD AFFAIRS

CALL FROM WARSAW

PANAMA AT THE CROSSROADS

WHO WAS BEHIND THE MURDER OF INDIRA GANDHI?

TALKING WITH PLANTS

A modern seven-storey building has recently gone up on the right-hand side of the motorway leading to Kishinev Airport. The building houses the Institute of Ecological Genetics with its amazing research system, the biotron, which has made it possible to "talk" with plants.

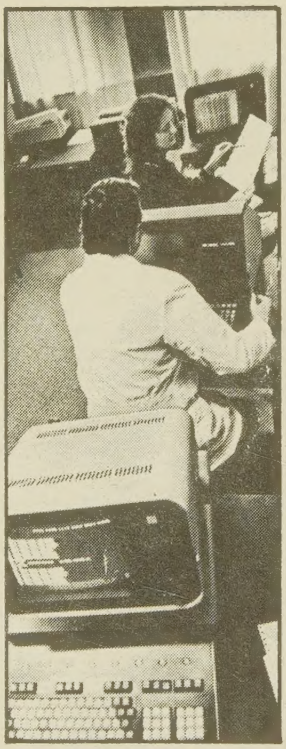
"This is actually so," says Alexander Zhuchenko, President of the Moldavian Academy of Sciences and director of the new institute. "The talking is done in a special language, of course, created by many generations of biologists in various specialities in collaboration with chemists and cybernetics experts."

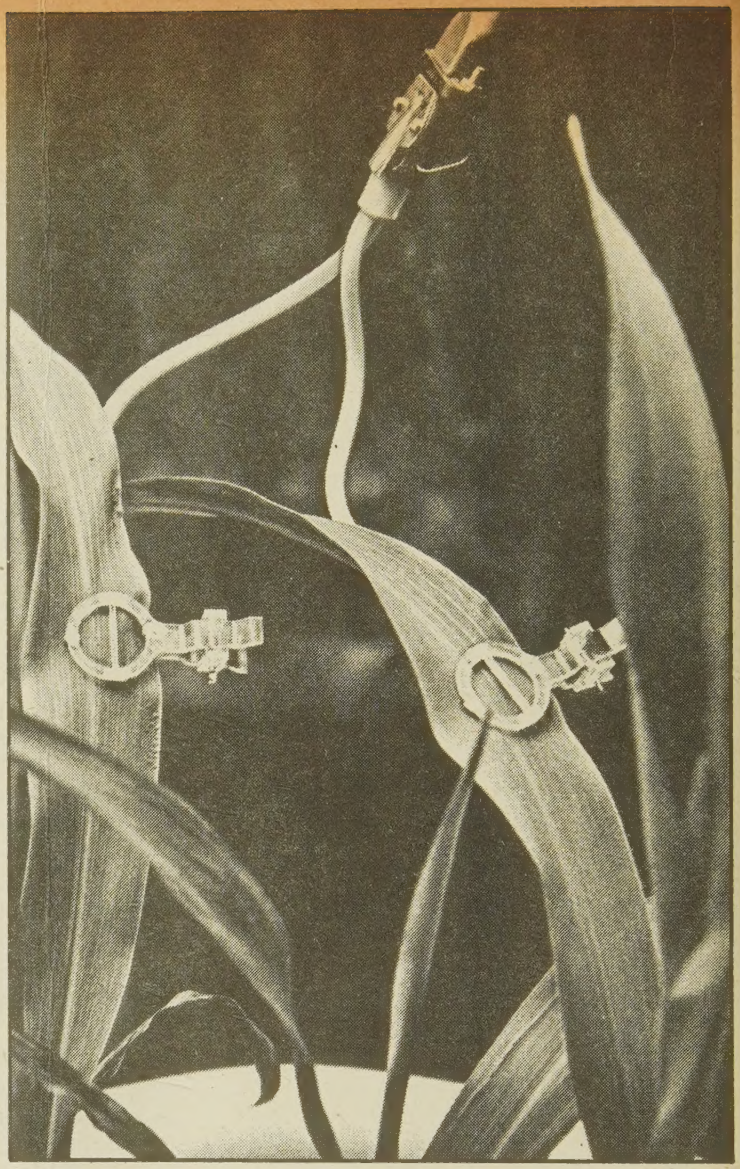
Selectionists, for instance, have always had many questions to ask new plants being experimented upon. But the plants maintained a tantalizing silence. They kept the research worker waiting till the autumn, when they finally responded to his treatment of them by yielding more or less fruit. Even such a seemingly convincing response, however, did not indicate what the plant needed and when. The results of an experiment could only be verified the following year. The selection process was extremely slow and some of the new strains were already obsolete by the time they reached the stage of commercial cultivation.

"The biological research complex now being established in Kishinev," Alexander Zhuchenko went on, "revolutionizes plant selection. The biotron's artificial climate chambers simulate the conditions of the plant's natural environment. It is important to 'talk' with a plant at all stages of its development. For this purpose we have fitted experimental specimens with electronic 'speech' transducers. These devices, developed by our Academy's scientists and designers, are performing extremely well."

Processed by a computer the transducers' signals are represented on a visual display unit in the form of tables and graphs needed by scientists before they can go ahead with an experiment. Now a research worker can see at once what effect fluctuations in temperature, humidity and light have on the leaves, floscules and fruit.

All information from experimental plants appears on visual display units.

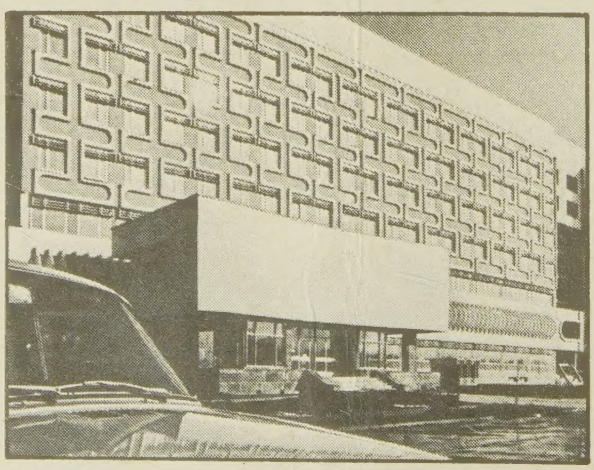




These transducers monitor leaf temperature.

The biotron makes it possible to breed strains and hybrids combining high crop yields with hardiness. This is a major achievement: previously many newly selected high-yield strains only did well in greenhouses and proved to have no resistance to pests, rain and wind in the field. Strains bred in the biotron are capable of ensuring a steady rise in crop yields.

The experiments by the Moldavian scientists have attracted a great deal of interest in other constituent republics of the U.S.S.R. and in CMEA member states. Several organizations have already signed agreements on cooperation with the institute and placed orders for this unique equipment.



The Institute of Ecological Genetics

Photo story by
B. Yevladov and
A. Savchenko

SPLURGE OF ADVENTURISM

The Pentagon seemed to have deliberately timed the nuclear explosion code-named Glencoe to coincide with the vernal equinox. But not only to mar the season of rebirth and hope. It was the United States' reply to the prolongation of the Soviet moratorium until the next U.S. nuclear explosion. Even the preparations for it were cut by several weeks. What was it if not a demonstration of bellicosity? All the more so, since the blast was accompanied by a flare-up of militarist hysteria and acceleration of the Pentagon's warlike preparations all along the line.

No less than to Glencoe America reverberated to frenzied calls to prevent the creation in Nicaragua of a "Warsaw Treaty beachhead on the doorstep of the United States." Libya, too, which likewise refuses to submit to U.S. diktat, is the target of another aggressive onslaught. It looks as if the Washington militarists have drawn a bead on the whole of the Mediterranean.

It is not by chance that the U.S. press sees a link between the American naval exercises in the Mediterranean and the provocative "innocent passage" of U.S. warships off the Crimean coast where they intruded into the Soviet Union's territorial waters. The New York Times frankly writes, citing Pentagon sources, that the object of the action was to probe the Soviet defences. An "innocent passage" indeed! Or perhaps it was described as "innocent" because this time there was no launching of warplanes or firing of guns. Pentagon officials said as much to the Washington Post.

We would not care to use the seemingly outdated term "brinkmanship," but there is no other word for it. This time it is a matter of balancing on the brink not of one war, but of several, from the so-called "low-intensity conflicts" with intractable newly independent countries to a world war, to plunge from the brink of which could be fatal for the whole of mankind. This of course is not the first time Washington has gone in for risky muscle-flexing. But the longer this exercise is continued the more dangerous it becomes, especially considering that it extends also to outer space.

Why this splurge of provocative militarist activity on Washington's part at this particular time? Many in the West attribute it mainly to the Reagan Administration's striving to create an international climate that would help to push through Congress still bigger military appropriations for the 1987 fiscal year. The stratagem, however, goes beyond bookkeeping operations with astronomic figures. Washington's bellicose actions combined with the latest pronouncements of the U.S. leaders, who in effect have returned to their notorious "crusade," create the impression that the U.S. imperialist quarters have been alarmed by the hopes that were engendered the world over by the Geneva summit. Even more disquieted are they by the powerful impulse to changes for the better in the world political arena given by the 27th Congress of the CPSU. After all, the deliberations at the congress demonstrated with utmost clarity that war, alien to the very nature of socialism, is completely at variance with the peaceful tasks of accelerating development, of renewal, facing our society at the present stage. It has become more difficult to speculate on the mythical "Soviet threat." For this, propaganda gambits, however ingenious, are no longer enough. What is needed, it appears, is political acts of provocation, such as the utterly groundless demand that the personnel of the U.S.S.R., Ukrainian and Byelorussian U.N. missions be cut almost by half. What is needed above all is military provocation, the smell of gunpowder, and, better still, of blood—other people's blood.

Not imperialism's confidence in its strength but its fear of the future is what underlies the present eruptions of U.S. military activity. But do they have the desired effect? Take if only the fact that the House of Representatives has so far refused to allocate the $100 million asked for the Nicaraguan contras. This may be only a drop in the ocean as compared with the multibillion-dollar arms programmes, but these programmes too, and above all SDI, are opposed by ever wider sections of the public, the U.S. public included. And, surely, the more obvious the dangers towards which Washington's adventurism is impelling the world, the greater should be the resolve of the peoples to give a rebuff to such a policy.

FROM OUR MAILBAG

◆ I read with great interest the interview General Secretary Gorbachev gave to L'Humanité. I am keeping the issue of the paper which carried the interview. I must say that the Right-wing press, after recovering from the initial shock, set about distorting the spirit of the interview and, naturally, hastened to label it "propaganda." But what surprised me was that the favourite themes of the Right-wing press—"human rights" in the U.S.S.R., Afghanistan, etc.—were passed over in silence. Mr Gorbachev's replies were so clear and unequivocal that, in my opinion, it was precisely his frankness that prompted the reactionary newspapers to refrain from their usual vituperative comment.

Roger LESIEUR
Saint-Quentin, France

◆ Four decades have passed since World War II and now world peace is again threatened. Full-scale preparations to unleash a nuclear holocaust are going on. Who is America's "enemy" now? Whence the "threat" to America? To those questions, the Pentagon and the CIA have the answers. On the excuse of a nonexistent "Soviet threat," a pre-emptive first strike is readied against the U.S.S.R. We are told here in America that we must "prevail," we have no other choice. Deterrence is the only thing the godless Communists understand. And if the Russians do not change their behaviour we will "bottle" them up near their own border. Navy Secretary John Lehman assures us that we are bound to "win" and come out "on top." On top of what? Of the nuclear ash-heap? The American atomaniacs must be stopped before it is too late. With so many different organizations in America, there is hope that responsible people will wake up in time and make a worthy contribution towards détente and a secure peaceful world.

B. SABRIN
New York, U.S.A.

◆ I was moved by the letter you received from the Canadian girl Evelyn Lau and I would like to answer her through your journal. Dear Evelyn, I have a daughter of about your age and two sons besides. Thank you for believing in us Russians. We detest war because it runs counter to our efforts to build a happy life. Unfortunately, not all people who live in the U.S., Canada and other Western countries believe us. Last year I was in Vancouver. I know that the Canadian authorities support the U.S. Administration's policy towards the Soviet Union. All sorts of incredible stories are circulated about life in our country and films that have nothing in common with the reality are shown. I assure you we live very well. We have no unemployment, no beggars, no hungry or homeless, no illiterates. We have no racism, no fascists, no free sale of firearms, no exploitation of man by man. It was painful for me to read your letter. You are so very young and they want to rob you of your future. But you must not despair. The important thing is to fight for your birthright—the right to life.

V. LAPIN
Moscow Region, U.S.S.R.

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Editor-in-Chief: MIKHAIL FYODOROV

Associate Editors: L. Bezymensky, V. Chernyavsky, S. Golyakov, Y. Gudkov, A. Pin, B. Pishchik, V. Rubtsov, I. Trofimova, V. Tsoppi, D. Volsky.
Editor of English edition: E. Smirnov

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The Soviet Union's calls to enter the 21st century without nuclear weapons have won wide support the world over. Against this background, the foreign policy stance of the White House which rejected the Soviet peace initiatives is seen not only as archaic but as a threat to the future of mankind.

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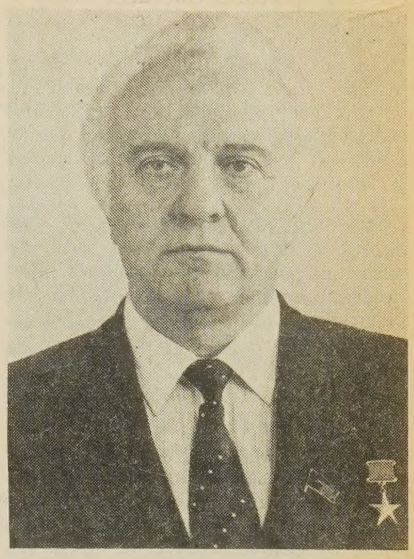
EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE: THE WORLD MUST BE SWEPT CLEAN OF NUCLEAR ARMS

At the close of his official visit to the Polish People's Republic, U.S.S.R. Foreign Minister and member of the CPSU Political Bureau EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE gave the following interview to the Polish Press Agency on March 19.



What in your opinion are the prospects for international relations, especially in the sphere of nuclear disarmament, in the light of the initiatives advanced at the 27th Congress of the CPSU?

Very encouraging, I would say. For today we have a political philosophy that accords with the most difficult and urgent problems of our time. It is a system of fundamentally new views and opinions on the only possible way of ensuring security and lasting peace for all in the present circumstances. The new approach set forth in Comrade Mikhail Gorbachev's political report reveals the invalidity of archaic notions of the role of force and deterrence, and primarily of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction.

In this concept politics and morality, the class approach and the interests of all humanity, theory and practice are combined in indivisible unity.

A socialist state possessing a powerful nuclear potential has announced its readiness, within the framework of international agreement, to completely eliminate its nuclear weapons.

And not only eliminate them, but to create in the world political arena an "environment" in which it would be impossible to resume the production of nuclear weapons or any other means of mass destruction.

Basing myself on the political report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Congress, I shall try to present a number of arguments showing why we have arrived at the conviction that the world must be swept clean of nuclear arms. And why this process should be started today and completed within the shortest possible time.

First: The price of security backed by nuclear weapons is permanent fear and the ever-growing risk of suicide. Such security is ephemeral and provides no guarantee. Any acute conflict situation is fraught with the threat of the destruction of mankind.

Second: Nuclear weapons have turned from a factor of deterrence—if they were ever that—into a stimulus to the arms race. Possession of these weapons is a "licence" to act at will and with impunity in international affairs, offers a sort of "nuclear immunity" from responsibility before the world community.

Third: The escalation of the arms buildup engendered by nuclear weapons undermines the economic, social and spiritual health of countries and peoples.

A practical plan for a stage-by-stage elimination of nuclear, chemical and other mass destruction weapons is put forward in Comrade Gorbachev's statement of January 15 this year. The ideas set forth in this document are the fruit of the collective effort of the fraternal socialist countries.

If it depended only on us, we would begin carrying out this plan today. In a certain sense we have already done so: we have had no nuclear explosions for seven months now, and shall not resume them, if the United States does not carry out such explosions, after March 31.

What reply did we get? An invitation to the opening of the spring season of nuclear testing in Nevada. Neither we nor the whole of mankind, whose view was recently expressed so wisely and farsightedly in an appeal issued by six non-aligned and neutral countries, need such spectaculars. That appeal met with full understanding and support on our part.

But, let me repeat, it does not depend on us alone. We cannot place our security or the security of our friends and allies in jeopardy.

Our position is simple: first let us terminate the explosions, and then we can do any amount of verifying and by any means.

We have made it quite clear that we agree to all forms of control, including on-site inspection. Should doubts arise as to the observance of this commitment, let them come over with bags full of verification devices.

Why do the Americans not agree to a moratorium? Why have they suddenly changed their own position on verification as the main problem?

Because this position served as a cover for their unwillingness to renounce nuclear explosions. They need the explosions in order to develop space weapons. The ending of testing would demolish their plans of "star wars" preparations.

Now the argument is that "so long as nuclear weapons exist they need to be tested." What is the logic here? As if the other side possessed weapons that require no testing.

The problem of nuclear explosions is precisely the sphere in which the true intentions and the actual readiness of states to resolve in practice the problems of nuclear disarmament are revealed with the utmost clarity.

The truth is: we are ready for this while the American side is not.

Why are the West European leaders who only a short while ago spoke so ardently of the need to ban nuclear explosions now concealing this truth? They have been struck dumb by the fact that speaking up would mean speaking up against Washington.

Today it is more important than ever to take the first practical step towards actual nuclear disarmament. It is clear to all of us that the simplest way to begin is by reducing the numbers of medium-range missiles in the European zone. In this respect we have opted for a variant that, it would seem, should open the way to a mutually acceptable solution.

However, the NATO countries, which only yesterday complained about our supposed intransigence, today are feverishly jacking up the "price" of their consent, clearly unwilling to remove the medium-range missiles from the European zone.

In this connection it is said that the British and French nuclear forces are "negligible." In the overall balance they are said to be a mere "trifle." But you get no answer when you ask whether these forces would be so negligible if the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. reduced their arsenals to 6,000 warheads and Britain and France retained

ANSWER TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE TIME

VLADLEN KUZNETSOV

Not long ago the Washington Post carried an article by Charles Wolf, director of the Rand Corporation's international economic policy programme, in which he dwelt on two concepts relating to the Soviet Union that have currency in the U.S. One is the "looking-glass reflection" concept which concedes that the Soviet Union has good reason to be concerned about its security and to take military measures to ensure the inviolability of its frontiers. This approach is justified by the past record of Western efforts to smash the Bolshevik revolution and by the 20 million Soviet lives lost in World War II.

The "looking-glass reflection" concept also presupposes that the long-term aims of the U.S.S.R. and the goals of the U.S.A. have something in common—desire for peace, improvement of the conditions of life, social progress and justice. If this concept really prevailed in the upper echelons of power in the United States there clearly would be no particular problems in the relations between the two most powerful states in the world. But unfortunately there is also another "looking glass," in which some profess to see the contours of a nonexistent Soviet military threat. A looking glass before which the military-industrial complex stands, admiring the play of its military muscles. This is the "maximum buildup of strength" concept. And that is what we see in action today..

The nearly 70 years since the October Revolution has not been enough for some quarters to decide from which standpoint to approach the Soviet Union, not enough to approximate to an understanding of the meaning of the policy of peaceful coexistence, which rules out once and for all the use of armed force to change the social character of the other system. And despite official statements about war and the striving for military superiority being inadmissible, reliance on force has not been abandoned.

Scenarios for a nuclear strike at the Soviet Union exist. This is the grim truth. The positions-of-strength approach to the settlement of the historical dispute between socialism and capitalism is conclusive evidence that the political thinking of an influential section of the Washington establishment lags behind the imperatives of our time. This is a highly dangerous anachronism.

Far from everyone in the West, as we can see, has fully realized that peaceful

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Second article. For first see our previous issue.

1,200 warheads on their nuclear missiles.

Some "trifle" indeed!

Here too one can clearly see who really wants peace and who wants to preserve and heighten the nuclear confrontation.

The latter are unwilling to remove the U.S. missiles from the territory of West European countries, and, to mislead their own peoples, artificially drag in the question of the Soviet operational-tactical missiles in Europe. As if they knew nothing about our unambiguous statement that these missiles will be withdrawn as soon as the problem of medium-range missiles is resolved.

Instead of unravelling the European missile knot, efforts are made to tighten it still more by talking about our missiles in Asia.

This, then, is the moment of truth: when it comes down to brass tacks, Washington and its allies do not want nuclear weapons abolished.

Nevertheless, we do not dramatize the situation. Sooner or later our philosophy, our concept of a nuclear-free world, will begin to be embodied in practice.

That is why I said at the very start that I consider the outlook encouraging.

We already have on our side world public opinion, powerful forces that resolutely want the earth rid of nuclear, chemical and other mass destruction weapons. And most important of all, we have loyal, reliable friends who think as we do and are waging the struggle from common positions—the other socialist countries.

One of the cardinal problems of the modern world is the problem of eliminating the debt burden. Comrade Wojciech Jaruzelski submitted a relevant proposal at the U.N. General Assembly. How is this problem evaluated in the Soviet Union?

I remember Comrade Jaruzelski's speech at the United Nations very well. It was received with keen interest.

His direct and clear presentation of the problem of the external indebtedness of states was consonant with the opinions and positions of most U.N. delegations, especially those of the developing countries. Comrade Jaruzelski's characterization of the situation as financial neocolonialism was a precise definition of the substance of the problem.

Imperialism is indeed constantly casting about for ways and means of perpetuating its economic domination over one or another country. The imperialist powers finance their military programmes and sustain their own economic well-being by unconscionable plunder of the nations.

Comrade Jaruzelski rightly linked the problem of development with the problem of indebtedness.

The arms race unleashed by imperialism has as its concomitant the growing impoverishment of countries and peoples. At our congress it was pointed out that there is a direct causal connection between the trillion-dollar debt of the developing countries and the more than trillion-dollar increase in U.S. military spending in the past 10 years. More than $200 billion is pumped out annually from the developing countries. The U.S. military budget in recent years has practically equalled that sum.

Rerouting of resources from arms production to peaceful branches of the economy, the channelling of the funds thus released to civilian development would make it possible to resolve all the basic economic and social problems of the Third World, where the number of the starving could reach one billion by the end of the century, where half of the infants die before they are a year old and only one out of every three children is inoculated against deadly infectious diseases.

And is it only a matter of the developing countries? Even in "prosperous" Western Europe reduction of military spending would yield an economy of $300 billion. Here too, in our opinion, the solution should be sought in the termination of the arms buildup, in disarmament, in a radical restructuring of international economic relations on a just, equal basis.

In this connection we attach particular importance to the concept of in-

coexistence is an objective political and military reality, a vital necessity, not an invention of the Soviet Union.

Universal Value

At their forum, the Soviet Communists once again voiced their conviction that the destinies of socialism and capitalism will be determined in the course of their economic and social competition—determined by the peoples, by time, not by force of arms. The congress confirmed that the Soviet Union has no aims vis-à-vis the capitalist countries other than peaceful coexistence, the policy that rules out the "export of revolution" (and hence also the "export of counterrevolution"), expansion, attempts to "win over" or "erode" other regimes, to convert anyone to one's own faith. The objective reality of today's world is such that the **contest between socialism and capitalism can proceed only and exclusively in the form of peaceful competition and peaceful rivalry.** This was the conclusion drawn by the congress.

Socialism does not place and has no intention of placing its ideological sympathies and antipathies above statesmanship, or its own interests above the interests of all humanity. The peace policy of the Soviet Union places the interests of all mankind above all else. For the U.S.S.R., serving universal peace and the good of all is the supreme wisdom. Lenin's followers are guided by his precept: "...From the standpoint of the basic ideas of Marxism, the interests of social development are higher than the interests of the proletariat." Peace is a universal value. There is nothing more important than peace. Universal peace stands above national egoisms and interests, above ideologies and world outlooks. And, of course, immeasurably higher than the profit extracted from the arms buildup by the military-industrial complexes of the West. The socialist ideal of peace in no way differs from that of humanity as a whole, from that of mankind's concept of humanism.

In the nuclear age peaceful coexistence is more essential than ever before. As the Soviet Union sees it, it implies not only absence of war, not "cold peace." Relations based on the principles of peaceful coexistence are correct and civilized, free of enmity and prejudice, hypocrisy and treachery, rancour and name-calling.

The nuclear threat is blind. It equates all countries and peoples, parties and parliaments, the whole of humanity, by impelling them all to the brink of the abyss.

All of which means that peace can be safeguarded only by joint effort. However different they may be, at times even diametrically opposed, political and public forces can and must unite in face of the common danger. Moscow holds that countries of the East and West have sufficient points of contact for joint action in the interests of world peace. The most important point of contact is **the objective need to live at peace with one another.** The joint desire to avert a nuclear catastrophe must prevail over all other political and ideological considerations. This is the basic groundwork for cooperation among all opponents of war, for the further strengthening of the mass anti-war movement, that vast **potential of peace, reason and good will,** as it is described in the documents of the 27th Congress.

The CPSU and the Soviet state invariably proceed from the common interest of all countries and peoples, governments and parties, and popular movements in preventing a nuclear catastrophe. The congress once again issued a call to rise above the differences dividing our world in order to save it from destruction, to realize at long last

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ternational economic security, which is one of the components of the comprehensive system of international security proposed at the 27th Congress of the CPSU. The Soviet Union, as Comrade Gorbachev said, advocates the convocation of a world congress to deal with this problem. In this sense the positions of the U.S.S.R. and the Polish People's Republic follow the same lines.

How would you assess the results of your present visit to Poland and what, in your opinion, are the main trends in the development of relations between our two countries?

Our visit took place in an exceptionally warm, cordial atmosphere. In our conversation with Comrade Jaruzelski and talks with my Polish opposite number, Marian Orzechowski, which continued the dialogue begun in Moscow in December 1985, we discussed a wide range of questions and problems. They were examined in the spirit of the fundamental understandings reached during the recent meeting of Mikhail Gorbachev and Wojciech Jaruzelski in Moscow.

We have every reason to be satisfied with the work done. Our cooperation is being expanded, enriched, deepened. This proceeds on the basis of equality and respect for each other's experience. Our mutual aid, our mutual assistance, is based on our mutual, I would say vital, interest in the success of socialist development in our countries. The better you live, the more achievements you have in economic, social and cultural upbuilding, the better it is for your friends in other socialist countries. And, accordingly, their achievements are of benefit to you.

The alliance of the Polish People's Republic with the U.S.S.R. and other countries of the community is a guarantee of the national sovereignty, independence and prosperity of a strong Poland. In this we see the fundamental distinctive feature of relations among the socialist countries.

As regards the basic trends in the development of relations between the U.S.S.R. and the Polish People's Republic, they are of long standing and determined by the common social and political system of our countries, by our common world outlook. As hitherto, we shall work together in the international arena for peace, against the nuclear threat and the war danger, for the promotion of mutually beneficial cooperation among all countries.

We were greatly impressed by the preparations for the 10th Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party, which undoubtedly will greatly influence the entire course of socialist upbuilding of Poland.

Comrade Jaruzelski presented to us an impressive picture of the party and the country as they approach this landmark forum of Poland's Communists. We Soviet Communists wish it every success.

Besides the official results of the visit that have been recorded in documents, there is something else worth noting. This is my first visit to Warsaw. Our meetings with the people of Warsaw in the streets and squares of this heroic city were marked by sincere cordiality. I was much interested in acquainting myself with the life of the capital and with the wonderful people of this fraternal country. I was deeply moved by my visits to sites that are sacred to our peoples—memorials to the comradeship-in-arms of the Soviet and Polish fighting men who gave their lives for the freedom and independence of their native land. Splendid work is being done to preserve monuments of the past. And the skill with which historical and cultural memorials are being restored is remarkable. In these spring days we basked in the generous sunshine of Polish art. We are proud that we have such friends and that together we are building the splendid edifice of Soviet-Polish friendship.

I would like sincerely to thank the Central Committee of the PUWP, the government of the republic, and Comrade Wojciech Jaruzelski personally for the attention and hospitality accorded us.

Please convey our warmest greetings and best wishes to the people of beautiful Warsaw, to all citizens of fraternal Poland. ■

and before it is too late that there is nothing more precious than peace both on earth and in outer space. The fact that defence of peace is in the fundamental interests of all, the need for co-operation of all forces at both governmental and non-governmental levels, underlies the Soviet Union's policy in the international arena.

There is much that divides the CPSU and social democracy, but there is nothing to prevent them from working together for peace. Public opinion in the Soviet Union differs from that in the capitalist countries, but there is nothing to divide them in the fight against war.

The **interdependence** of nations and states in the modern world, which no one denies, **must be transformed** into joint action, which, regrettably, far from all are ready for. The Soviet Union stands for both bilateral and multilateral direct and systematic dialogue among the leaders of the countries of the world community. Such a dialogue among the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—the five nuclear powers—is particularly important. The Soviet Union urges the solution also of the problems of economic security by joint efforts, including the convocation of a world congress.

Most Sensitive Nerve

The question of **security** in the nuclear age is the crucial question, the most sensitive nerve in East-West relations. No one in the world today can afford to behave like the hermit crab. No one can any longer say with any certainty that his house is his castle. No national house is insured against a nuclear conflagration. And so it will be until the inflammable material on our planet is done away with by joint effort, until each house is reliably insured. For in our day and age there can be no security for the U.S.S.R. without security for the U.S.A., no security for the Warsaw Treaty countries without security for the NATO countries. And without their mutual security, there can be no universal security. Security is indivisible. He who seeks peace and security only for himself might find himself without the one and the other.

What did the 27th Congress have to say on this score? Security as regards Soviet-American relations can only be mutual, and as regards international relations in general only universal. The safeguarding of security presents itself more and more as a political problem and it can be resolved only by political means. The Soviet Union does not lay claim to greater security than is enjoyed by others, but neither will it agree to less.

Is this approach not fair? Does it infringe anyone's interests?

The 27th Congress proposed to the international community that **the basis be laid jointly for a comprehensive system of international security** in all the decisive spheres of human endeavour —political, military, economic and humanitarian. The project provides for such major far-reaching measures as the renunciation by the nuclear powers of war, nuclear or non-nuclear, against one another or against third countries; total abolition of nuclear and chemical weapons; prevention of an arms race in outer space, the use of outer space for peaceful purposes only; dissolution of military blocs; political settlement of regional conflicts; combating international terrorism; solution of global problems on which the future of civilization depends; extension of international cooperation in the sphere of the political, social and individual rights of man; humane and positive solution of problems relating to the reunion of families, to marriages, and the promotion of people-to-people contacts and contacts between organizations.

Security in all its aspects—the military, political and economic alike—is the key to reliably guaranteed universal peace.

What is in question, then, is the elaboration of the principles, criteria and standards of mutual security. We are convinced that the doctrine of universal, collective and equal security for all should take the place of the concept of "potential adversaries." The fallacy of that concept, which stems from the assumption that military rivalry is inevitable and irreversible, is plain to see. Those who regard others as potential enemies think in terms of potential conflicts and prepare for them. Security today can be ensured only jointly with the so-called "potential adversaries."

Security considerations continue by inertia to be given as justification for the arms buildup. Security continues to be sought—likewise by inertia—unilaterally, on the basis of superior strength. Prominent U.S. politologists Colin Gray and Keith Payne, for instance, say that the only guarantee of security is to be stronger. A positive foreign policy, they contend, has a chance only if one has a preponderance of military strength one can employ at will.

The trouble is, however, that in the nuclear age opportunities for using military strength, especially nuclear strength, for manipulating with it "at will," have been reduced practically to nil. If in some instances and on limited scale the use of armed force can produce the desired results (witness Grenada), the use of armed force that threatens to spark off a third world war can lead only to one thing—universal annihilation.

In the pre-nuclear age security was usually ensured mainly by technical means of warfare. This approach is practised today too. But what kind of security can the nuclear arms buildup ensure? At best security on the brink of war, if that can be called security.

Genuine security at the present level of development of the means of mass destruction can no longer be guaranteed by military technology alone. It cannot be endlessly built on the threat of force, which only escalates the arms race. As was pointed out at the 27th CPSU Congress, truly equal security in our time is guaranteed not by the highest possible but by the lowest possible level of the strategic balance, with nuclear and other types of mass destruction weapons totally eliminated.

The U.S. Blueprint

This view, however, is being challenged. U.S. Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger, for instance, contends that the security of the West and world peace depend wholly on American military strength. His formula leaves the Soviet Union altogether out of count. This is a clear case of the arrogance of power blotting out reason.

Weinberger's contention shows that the nature of imperialism, which unleashed two world wars, has not changed. But whether he and others like him realize it or not, the same cannot be said of the nature of war. Full-scale modern war can only lead to a radioactive grave, not to victory over the ideological opponent, not to the conquest of raw materials sources, markets, or other peoples' lands. And even minor wars are fraught with the danger of a big war. Although imperialism still continues to generate aggressive, at times adventuristic, policy, its potential is far from inexhaustible. The apologists of power politics would do well to bear this in mind.

If the U.S. does not want to listen to the U.S.S.R., it ought at least to heed what is being said in allied NATO countries.

World peace is possible only to the extent to which the need for collective security is appreciated. Neither side can any longer ensure its security by arming itself with the object of undermining the security of the other side. What we need is a more rational policy and not more lethal weapons.

Thus Willy Brandt, chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and former Chancellor of the Federal Republic.

Europeans do not take seriously the notion that a great power can safeguard its security only by means of its own policy, technology and arms production.

Thus Helmut Schmidt, former F.R.G. Chancellor.

Experience shows that neither a striving for military superiority nor counting on the technological gap can be a suitable means of winning the contest between the systems: only mutual understanding on the basis of equality and respect for each other's legitimate interests can lead to guaranteed durable peace.

Thus Hans-Dietrich Genscher, F.R.G. Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister.

We must cultivate in ourselves tolerance instead of stirring up hatred, and we must discard traditional, all too convenient notions about the opponent.

Thus Richard von Weizsäcker, President of the F.R.G.

The Soviet Union shares these views. Just as it shares the views of all sober-minded political leaders ready to close the dangerous gulf between the realities of the nuclear age and awareness of these realities.

To Renounce Stereotypes

Why does the present Soviet leadership attach such importance to the need for new political thinking that would correspond to the realities and requirements of our epoch? Mikhail Gorbachev has answered this question. For the worst to happen, he said, no unprecedented crime or folly need be committed. It is enough to go on doing what has been done for thousands of years: to depend on arms and armed force in the conduct of international affairs, and to use that force given the chance. It is these hoary traditions that must now be uncompromisingly broken with, completely discarded. Otherwise the problem of the survival of humanity may prove to be insoluble.

The facts of life of today require that the criteria and stereotypes of yesterday be resolutely rejected. That the old notions of armed strength and armaments, military superiority, security and strategic stability be discarded. The importance of the scientific and technological revolution is recognized everywhere in the world. Just as essential for mankind is a revolution in foreign policy thinking and practice.

It has been rightly observed that stereotyped thinking is sometimes harder to overcome than it is to pierce armour-plating. Clearly these stereotypes must be done away with before the war machine can be sent to the scrap heap.

The documents of the 27th CPSU Congress take a new, innovative approach to world affairs and politics. In what is this approach manifested?

In restraint and self-limitation in military activity.

In readiness to agree to the most far-reaching measures of control over the limitation and reduction of armaments, all the way to on-site verification.

In readiness to take into account the interests and requirements of other nations, to overcome accretions of mutual prejudice accumulated over the postwar decades, to end distrust and suspicion.

In a clearly expressed striving to promote correct, truly civilized relations with all countries.

In the rejection of one-sided advantages encroaching on the security of the other side and thereby making for greater military rivalry.

In a striving to rise above the differences between East and West, to make the two sides partners in security, in combating the nuclear threat.

In dedication to a policy of global security and détente as a counterweight to the policy of blocs and counterblocs, "axes" and "triangles."

In a deeper awareness that the integrity and interdependence of the world is a factor of human survival.

In the fact that the congress addressed itself to complex and little studied problems of international relations, such as the establishment in one form or another of contacts between the Warsaw Treaty states and the North Atlantic alliance as organizations.

The Soviet Union not only propounds a new, bold approach to international affairs but gives effect to such an approach in practice. Take, for instance, its 15-year programme for complete nuclear disarmament everywhere, including the renunciation of the development of space weapons, and with strict international control. Even the opponents and critics of the project have to admit that it has no precedent for the magnitude and historical significance of its objectives. The Soviet Union has set an example of genuinely new thinking in the sphere of foreign policy. Its substance is the **building of universal security not with nuclear and other weapons, but without them,** replacing nuclear deterrence, which some in the West believe is a guarantee of peace, with nuclear disarmament, global security and stability.

In his recent State of the Union message the U.S. President lauded the physicists who probe the microworld of elementary particles, and expressed his admiration of the astronomers who are building a space telescope. "Never has there been a more exciting time to be alive," he said, "a time of rousing wonder and heroic achievement." All that is so. The President is right. But heroic achievements are needed in politics as well. Why not launch out in that direction? Would not nuclear disarmament be such a heroic achievement?

Against this background of rapid scientific and technological advance depicted in the President's message, the foreign policy stance of the White House looks, alas, as hidebound as ever. The same pathological distrust of the U.S.S.R., the same anti-Soviet clichés and standard unfounded accusations of a "drive for domination" on the part of Moscow. The same deafness to Soviet peace initiatives that literally hammer at the door of the White House. The President, who spoke of the "magic of opportunity," did not even mention Mikhail Gorbachev's statement in which world opinion saw a truly unique, epochal opportunity to switch the march of world events from war to peace.

Our time is a test for the statesmanship of all countries and peoples. As the U.N. General Assembly resolution on the International Year of Peace says, 1986 "provides a timely impetus for initiating renewed thought and action for the promotion of peace." The Soviet Union, as the 27th Congress of the CPSU showed, does not seek to evade such a test of its foreign policy and its actions in the world arena, but is bringing them into full conformity with the realities and requirements of the world situation on the approaches to the 21st century, with the supreme interests of mankind.

"Reason nevertheless prevails in world history," Karl Marx said. It prevails, although long periods of mental derangement and even insanity are not rare. It prevails, even though there are temporary setbacks. Let us hope that reason at state level will gain the upper hand also at this period in world history when the question of mankind's survival is being decided. The U.S.S.R. and the other socialist countries will spare no effort to hasten the triumph of reason, the advent of a better world.

What kind of a better world?

A world in which the risk of a universal catastrophe will be reduced to the minimum and eventually eliminated altogether.

A world in which power politics will yield place to politics of reason.

A world without nuclear explosions, without weapons on earth or in outer space.

A world in which peoples and states will feel perfectly safe, free from fear of war.

To open for mankind the bright prospect of a peaceful life in the third millennium it is necessary to leave the engines of war on its threshold.

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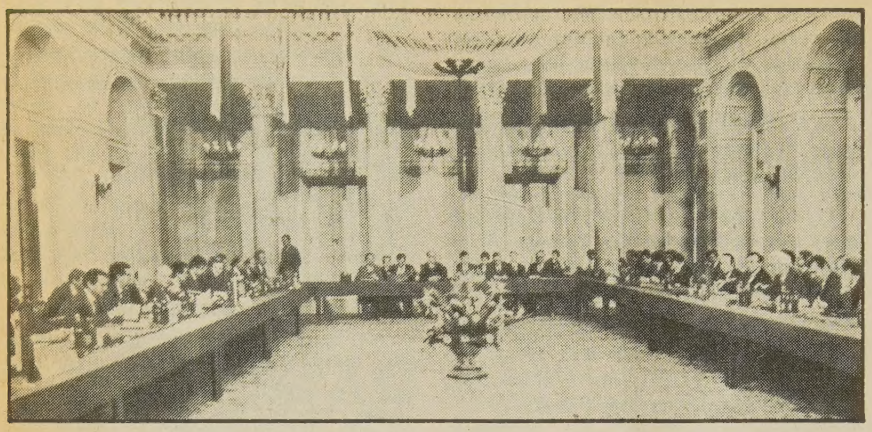

WARSAW TREATY

CLEAR SKIES FOR EUROPE AND THE WORLD

The countries of the socialist community are united in their desire to do everything in their power to ensure that 1986, which the U.N. has declared the International Year of Peace, should see a perceptible improvement in European and world affairs. This was convincingly illustrated in Warsaw on March 19 and 20 at a session of the foreign ministers' committee of the Warsaw Treaty states. It demonstrated once again the consistent peace-loving character of the policies pursued by the fraternal countries and showed that they are striving jointly to cope with the most pressing issues of today: banishing the threat of nuclear war, ending the arms race, especially nuclear, and achieving disarmament.

Men and women of good will have already accorded due credit to the programme the General Secretary of the CPSU enunciated in his January 15 statement to secure the complete abolition of all nuclear and chemical weapons together with the prohibition of space strike weapons before the present century ends. In voicing full support for this programme, the Warsaw Treaty countries urged the NATO states, especially the U.S., Britain and France, to display a sense of realism and responsibility along with an understanding of the interests of both sides and all concerned parties, for it is only thus that accords meeting the aspirations of all nations can be reached.

At their Warsaw meeting, the foreign ministers reaffirmed the principled stand of their respective states and the proposals presented for disarmament and stronger peace and international security. In their view the abolition of weapons of mass destruction should be accompanied by cutbacks in conventional armaments and armed forces. They advocate strict observance of the principle of equality and equal security and military balance at the lowest possible level.

The Soviet-American summit in Geneva paved the way for a turning away from confrontation to normalization of bilateral relations and amelioration of the international situation. It was emphasized that the coming Soviet-American summit should focus on issues relating to the conclusion of concrete agreements to end the arms race, especially nuclear, on earth and to avert such an arms race in space. This summit could agree at the very least to an end to nuclear tests and the dismantling of U.S. and Soviet intermediate-range missiles in the European zone.

The unremitting deployment of U.S. intermediate-range missiles in several West European countries has caused serious anxiety among the peoples of the continent. The Warsaw Treaty states share their concern for the fate of our common home and are categorically opposed to the further transformation of Europe into a nuclear powder keg. They want Europe to be rid completely of both intermediate-range and tactical nuclear weaponry and call in the first instance for the complete elimination of Soviet and American intermediate-range missiles, both ballistic and cruise, in the European zone. This is quite feasible, provided that the U.S. pledges not to transfer its strategic and intermediate-range missiles to other countries and that neither Britain nor France augment their own nuclear stockpiles. "Given the complete elimination of U.S. intermediate-range missiles in Europe," the Warsaw meeting noted, "there will be no need for the further presence of Soviet operational-tactical missiles of increased range in countries where they have been deployed."

The U.S.S.R. and the other fraternal states are firmly convinced that security in Europe and elsewhere is a political

Above: The foreign ministers' committee of the Warsaw Treaty countries in session in the Polish capital.

CAF-TASS photo

STOP NUCLEAR TESTING

Public attention worldwide is now focussed on the issue of ending nuclear tests. Politicians and public figures, members of parliament and scientists in all countries, distinguished U.S. scientists included, point to the urgent need to put an end to nuclear testing. The leaders of Argentina, India, Mexico, Tanzania, Sweden and Greece have suggested that all nuclear tests be suspended until the next summit meeting. The Soviet Union's unilateral moratorium on nuclear tests has been enthusiastically approved by nations on all continents.

The Presidium of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet has sent an appeal to the Congress of the United States which reads: **"We call upon Congress to do everything in its power to ensure that the U.S. position should also accord with the objective of ending nuclear tests in conformity with the will of the nations who yearn for lasting world peace."** (The text of the appeal was made public on March 20.)

Our two countries, which possess the largest arsenals of nuclear weapons, the appeal says, should be the first to stop testing. Our two countries can and must justify the hopes of all nations for peace.

issue, which can only be resolved by political means. The socialist countries have always persuasively advocated a constructive dialogue on the most pressing issues in international affairs. They favour the consistent continuation of the pan-European process initiated in Helsinki. The communiqué adopted in Warsaw demonstrates the importance they attach to the Stockholm Conference on confidence and security-building measures and disarmament in Europe, as well as to the next meeting in Vienna of the countries which took part in the Helsinki Conference, and to the forthcoming meeting in Berne of experts from these countries on contacts between people, institutions and organizations.

The destinies of Europe and the entire world are inseparably linked today with the cardinal issue facing humanity—keeping space peaceful. Preventing the extension of the arms race into outer space is essential for big reductions in nuclear weaponry and its eventual complete elimination. Accordingly, the foreign ministers of the Warsaw Treaty states stressed the grave responsibility that devolves upon those who are initiating programmes to place weapons in outer space. The implementation of projects akin to the so-called European Defence Initiative, which have been put forward in some West European countries, is also dangerous.

The Warsaw Treaty states again appealed to the U.S. to end all nuclear explosions as the Soviet Union has done. Sadly, Washington continues to turn a deaf ear to the voice of reason. The latest American nuclear weapon test graphically demonstrated that for the time being the U.S. does not plan to abandon its obsession with military superiority. We believe that all who care about the future of the world will subscribe to the view expressed in Warsaw that "everything must be done to secure an agreement on the termination of all nuclear explosions."

All men and women of good will hope that the consistent effort which the U.S.S.R. and its allies are making towards European and global security and the world public opinion will force the White House to revise its policy.

A. ZIMIN

U.S.A.—NICARAGUA

BATTLE ON CAPITOL HILL

On March 20 the U.S. House of Representatives turned down by a 222 to 210 vote a bill providing for $100 million in aid to the Nicaraguan contras. Foreign press commentators have qualified this as the biggest political defeat for the President since he took over the White House.

Until the last moment the President and his entourage exerted every effort to alter the course of the debate in their own favour. The opponents of the bill were literally besieged by White House lobbyists.

The chief lobbyist for the contras was Reagan himself. In a television appearance on March 16 he urged the Americans to exercise pressure on congressmen who intended to block the Administration's request. On the eve of the vote in the House, the President had 94 meetings with legislators and personally phoned six senators and 14 members of the House of Representatives.

Commentators point out that the President clearly overestimated his popularity. Most Americans declared against increased aid to the counterrevolutionary scum. About half of the private citizens who phoned Congress the day after the President's speech voiced concern over the possibility of Nicaragua becoming another Vietnam for the United States. A highly negative reaction among the public and congressmen was evoked by the President's attacks against Nicaragua, Cuba and the U.S.S.R. which were based on patently false information.

Seeing that the President's speech had failed to produce the desired results, the Administration changed its tactics. Two days before the vote the Washington correspondent of the NBC TV network observed that the rhetoric about aid to the Nicaraguan "rebels" had waned. The hysterical slogan to the effect that it was a matter of either voting with the President or "helping the Communists," issued in early March to influence Congress, was relegated to the background. Its place was taken by assurances of the "peaceful character" of the Administration's Central American policy.

In an effort to save the bill, the President on the eve of the vote said the Administration was ready to compromise. In exchange for the consent of the House to extend the additional aid to the contras, he promised to put off for ninety days deliveries of offensive armaments to the counterrevolutionary mercenaries, supposedly in order to undertake vigorous diplomatic efforts for "durable peace."

House Speaker Thomas O'Neill and other leaders of the Democratic majority rightly saw in the White House manoeuvre an attempt to camouflage the United States' military aims in the region. They saw no striving for peace in the President's promise to send Philip Habib on a special mission to the Contadora countries. As was demonstrated by his recent tour of Central America, this experienced diplomat is least of all concerned with the peaceful settlement of the conflict. His prime objective is to compel the Sandinists to negotiate with the contras, who have been suffering defeat after defeat. Habib is trying to knock together an anti-Nicaragua bloc, and in some respects he has succeeded. For instance, obviously under pressure from Habib, the Costa Rican government is impeding the realization of the agreement reached between that country and the Nicaraguan government in early March on the establishment of a bilateral civilian commission to control and observe the situation on the frontier between the two countries.

Thus, in the first round of the battle between the White House and the opposition over the issue of aid to the contras, the upper hand has been gained by the opponents of expanded U.S. interference in the affairs of Nicaragua. The President and his team, however, do not propose to lay down arms. After a hearing in the Senate, where the Republicans have a solid majority, the bill is to be returned to the House in April. According to White House spokesman Larry Speakes, Reagan counts on completing by this time the indoctrination of the Democrats and the Republicans who disagree with him and getting Congress to toe the line.

We shall not conjecture as to what stand the House will take in the forthcoming vote. One thing, however, is already clear: the policy of resolving the problems of Central America by force is not supported by sober-minded Americans.

V. KULISTIKOV

U.S.A.

THAT EXPLOSION

On March 22, the United States carried out a nuclear test in Nevada—the first this year and the eighth since the Soviet Union's declaration of the unilateral moratorium. This is the first provocation following the new Soviet proposal to extend the moratorium beyond March 31 on condition that America also refrains from nuclear testing. It also follows the appeal to the President by 64 congressmen not to miss this unique opportunity in the field of arms control, and similar appeals from numerous American and international peace organizations.

The 150-kiloton explosion had to be announced in advance as it could have caused underground tremors in nearby towns. There are two versions of what has been tested: the White House asserts that it was a warhead for the Midgetman mobile intercontinental ballistic missile, while Congress claims that the explosion involved components of a nuclear-pumped X-ray laser as part of the "star wars" programme.

Here are two comments from Capitol Hill.

Senator Alan Cranston (Democrat, California) is of the opinion that the Administration's decision was unwise and reckless. He went on to say that they were going to submit to the Senate a bill banning all allocations for nuclear tests.

Senator John Kerry (Democrat, Massachusetts) said that the Administration had ignored not only the moratorium observed by the U.S.S.R. but also Congress's express demand that nuclear testing be banned. The truth of the matter is, the Senator pointed out, that the Reagan Administration would not stop the tests for as long as it clung to the unrealistic notion that nuclear-pumped X-ray lasers could provide protection from nuclear missiles.

This however is the notion that preoccupies U.S. leaders today. In the view of a State Department spokesman, the U.S. will continue with nuclear testing to ensure confidence in the effectiveness of the American nuclear deterrent.

All things considered, it would seem that Washington is again trying to slam the door to peace opened by Moscow.

G. SIDOROVA

YOUNG ENVOY OF PEACE

"How wonderful!" the NBC TV newscaster spontaneously exclaimed when the blue-eyed Soviet schoolgirl wished American coevals "clear skies, bright sunshine and peace."

At that time, as one news commentator aptly observed, the focus of Soviet-American relations shifted from Washington to Chicago. Having discreetly relegated to an inside page the item reporting the Reagan Administration's ostentatious refusal to follow the Soviet nuclear test moratorium, American newspapers gave prominent coverage to the peace visit of Moscow fifth-grader Katya Lycheva, which started in Chicago.

Patricia Montandon, who organized the visit in her capacity as head of Children As the Peacemakers, told me that four years ago when planning her first trip to the U.S.S.R. she had seen that American children were really scared of going "to the Soviets." The late Yuri Andropov's reply to the letter from Maine schoolgirl Samantha Smith and her journey around the U.S.S.R. cut through the curtain of official propaganda clichés in many American minds.

Moscow schoolgirl Katya Lycheva's current peace trip will be a further move towards improved understanding between peoples, a bridge that will help our leaders ensure peace and remove the menace of nuclear disaster, Patricia Montandon said. She is convinced that what her organization does has nothing to do with politics. It is true that the campaign for peace can scarcely count as politics, at least in the interpretation the present U.S. policy-makers are attempting to foist on Americans. According to Patricia, representatives of Children As the Peacemakers have been received in the Kremlin and had top-level audiences in other capitals. Only in the White House were they not granted an audience despite repeated requests. But in the course of Katya's visit it could happen.

The programme for the Soviet Union's eleven-year-old messenger of peace envisages peace lessons at U.S. schools, talks about Soviet children, meetings at the U.N. and visits to the favourite holiday haunts of her American coevals. Before the start of one such busy day I phoned Katya in Chicago.

"You want to know my first impressions?" she replied. "It's the very keen interest here in everything to do with Soviet schoolchildren and the main thing is the astonishment that we are just the same as American children."

At any rate, initial local public response indicates that one more step has been made to melt the ice, that one more step, unpretentious but essential, has been made towards better understanding between the children and adults of our two countries.

On March 23 Katya arrived in New York. She is expected to visit other cities.

Our Own Correspondent
New York

Katya Lycheva (left) with ten-year-old Star Rowe of San Francisco upon her arrival at the Chicago air terminal.

UPI-TASS photo

NATO

NO CHANGE

On March 20-21 the NATO Nuclear Planning Group met for a routine session at defence minister level in Würzburg, F.R.G. An encouraging news for the Atlanticists was the earlier accord between West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and U.S. Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger on Bonn's participation in SDI.

The "star wars" theme loomed large at the meeting. Caspar Weinberger, his assistant Richard Perle and General James Abrahamson tried hard to impress upon doubting allies that it was essential to contribute to the implementation of SDI. The tactic was to win the political support of allied governments even without a pro forma agreement, and to enlist European firms whose projects are of interest to Washington.

Washington's emissaries argued that the SDI shield would ensure the safety of other NATO countries too, as it would protect their territories against intermediate-range and tactical missiles. This is a point that has of late aroused lively discussions in NATO capitals. A European project, similar to SDI, that would offer an anti-missile defence system for Western Europe, has even been suggested. The allies backed the U.S. "zero option" on intermediate-range missiles. Indeed, it would have been hard to expect anything else, insofar as this latest revision of the old proposal the U.S. has tabled at the Geneva talks was discussed well in advance with the allies, and is now being presented as a collective NATO decision.

The duality of the stance on space armaments in the final communiqué adopted at the session is worthy of attention. On the one hand, NATO welcomed the Soviet-American pledge to secure early progress at nuclear arms and space defence talks. However, a little lower down it unequivocally seconded the U.S. attitude regarding space systems. In Geneva, Washington has categorically declined to discuss the issue. In Würzburg, Caspar Weinberger likewise stated that SDI was not a bargaining point.

The Nuclear Planning Group's spring session has brought no new decisions or recommendations. What it has shown once again, though, is that NATO is pursuing a policy of confrontation and heightened tension.

D. MAXIMOV

U.S.A.—UNITED NATIONS

OUT TO DICTATE TO THE WORLD ORGANIZATION

The unwarranted and arbitrary demand by the U.S. Administration that the personnel of the U.N. missions of the U.S.S.R., Ukraine and Byelorussia be reduced (see issue No. 11) is encountering mounting condemnation on the part of the world public. At meetings of the U.N. Committee on Relations with the Host Country, the representatives of a number of countries accused the White House of an unprecedented violation of the norms of international law.

"This latest manoeuvre," a statement issued by the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs says, "has the object of limiting the work the socialist countries and all progressive states are doing within the framework of the world organization in the name of peace, the ending of the arms race, respect for sovereignty and independence, and the social progress of the peoples. It is also aimed at impeding their struggle against racism and for the decolonization of countries still subject to oppression. . . ."

"The Soviet delegation would like to emphasize most vigorously that this is not only a matter of Soviet-American relations but of the U.S. Administration's arbitrary stance striking at the rights of all U.N. members, at the rights and prerogatives of the United Nations Organization as a whole," the Soviet Union's U.N. ambassador, Yuri Dubinin, stressed at a meeting of the committee. It is perfectly obvious, he said, that in undertaking this long planned and carefully considered action Washington seeks to make power politics the norm of relations between the United States and this most prestigious world organization.

American government officials of different ranks are now bending over backwards in an effort to find some justification for the White House move. They are unable, however, to deny that the unilateral American action ignores facts that are obvious to all. First, the missions of the U.N. member states are not in New York as guests of the U.S. government but are accredited to the United Nations Organization in conformity with international law. Second, it is absurd to compare the size of the American mission with the Soviet. The U.S. mission being in its own country has at its disposal all state and private facilities, and experts who need not travel halfway across the world to consult on issues arising in the United Nations. Lastly, Washington with its predilection for statistics ought to know better than anyone else that the scale of U.N. activity has considerably increased in the past twenty years, that the number of U.N. agencies, meetings and conferences has more than doubled. The Soviet Union, with its conscientious attitude to United Nations issues, its striving to ensure the maximum fruitfulness of the work of the organization naturally needs a correspondingly large staff at its mission. "The American action amounts to a demand virtually to reduce the number of those who were the initiators of the successes achieved by the U.N., the realization of its Charter principles," Jaroslav Cesar, the Czechoslovak U.N. ambassador, said.

What is being engineered is in effect an act of political sabotage against the U.N. designed to realize the long-cherished dream of the U.S. Administration—to establish control over and dictate its will to the world organization. This is confirmed by the U.S. Administration's intention to impose financial "sanctions" on the U.N. Even its Western partners have qualified the U.S. intention to reduce its contribution to the organization's budget as "significantly affecting the Administration's ability to comply with its international treaty obligations."

A. ARKHIPOV
Our Own Correspondent

New York

MIDDLE EAST

DANGEROUS CONSPIRACY

The situation in the Middle East has deteriorated to the extreme: Washington has gone over from ominous threats to brazen aggression. On orders from the Pentagon, the U.S. Sixth Fleet, which has been demonstratively holding manoeuvres in the Southern Mediterranean, has struck at Libya. Its aircraft attacked Libyan air and naval forces and fired missiles at targets in the vicinity of the town of Sirte.

Thus, the psychological war against Libya, which Washington has been steadily escalating in recent months, has developed into a criminal act of bloody violence. This is the "doctrine of neo-globalism" in action—the doctrine by means of which the White House seeks to force peoples to submit to its dictate. The U.S. Administration evidently decided to use the Libyan example to teach these peoples "a lesson."

It is indicative that at the very time U.S. propaganda was trying to "justify" the planned attack by the Sixth Fleet on Libya, the Zionist propaganda machine launched an anti-Syrian campaign.

It began with the Israeli representative in the U.N. sending a letter to the U.N. Secretary-General accusing Syria of hindering the "establishment of peace in the Middle East." Syria is depicted as an aggressor armed to the teeth, ready at any moment to pounce on the "peace-loving" Zionist state and snatch the Golan Heights away from it (the Golan Heights are not directly mentioned in the letter, as that would be the height of cynicism, since this piece of Syrian territory was occupied by Israel in 1967 and, despite world protest, unlawfully annexed by it in 1981). Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, dilating on the "complaint" in the United Nations, gave the show away when he said that Israel feared Syria might start a limited war for the return of the Golan Heights. To give more weight to the anti-Syrian campaign, Peres went personally to the Heights on an inspection tour along the disengagement line between the Syrian and Israeli forces. At the same time, the Israeli occupation forces and their hirelings operating in Southern Lebanon again began escalating tension in that region. The "blame" is laid on Syria which, according to Tel Aviv, is "actively supporting and encouraging international terrorism."

But substitute the word "Syria" for the word "Libya" and it will be seen that Tel Aviv and Washington are to all intents and purposes playing the same tune.

The U.S. Ambassador in Israel Thomas Pickering, upholding Washington's and Tel Aviv's anti-Libyan and anti-Syrian campaign, said that the U.S. government would not abandon its role, since what he called radical forces and votaries of terror were making life difficult and dangerous.

Here is another characteristic detail. Tel Aviv is again raising a fuss about the air defence missile launchers which Syria has deployed on its own territory and which supposedly threaten Israel. In the Pentagon's opinion, the Americans, too, are threatened—by the two anti-aircraft installations recently deployed on the Libyan coast. According to a Defence Department spokesman, the United States would like to provoke Libya in order to get an excuse to strike a retaliatory blow and destroy these two

air defence installations. Now the whole world sees what that desire has led to.

Tel Aviv, spurred by the example of its "strategic ally," is also ready for any provocation. It, too, is playing dangerously with fire. It is not for nothing that the Syrian newspaper Al-Baath has warned about "a carefully planned conspiracy" on Washington's part in the Middle East "with unpredictable consequences both for the Mediterranean region and the world as a whole."

E. KORSHUNOV

NETHERLANDS

MUNICIPAL POLL—TRIAL OF STRENGTH

At the March 19 municipal elections in the Netherlands the opposition Labour Party polled 32 per cent of the total vote, increasing the representation in local government it won in the 1982 elections by 7 per cent. On the other hand, the parties that make up the ruling Right-of-Centre coalition sustained considerable losses. Local commentators say the results reflect popular discontent with the ruling coalition's policies.

The Dutch are worried by the high level of unemployment. At present there are more than 750,000 jobless in the country. The people are opposed to the policy of austerity which has made a deep inroad into their real incomes.

Nor did voters overlook the government's decision last November to give the green light to cruise missile deployment, a step that was taken in defiance of the overwhelming majority. A week before the municipal elections a trial started in The Hague in which some 20,000 citizens and 250 public organizations accuse the government of infringing on national sovereignty by allowing the installation of American missiles.

The Labour Party, supported by trade unions, has put forward a limited but feasible plan to combat unemployment. If returned to power, it has promised to move towards a juster distribution of incomes and to spread the burden of the economic crisis more equitably. It objects to U.S. nuclear missile deployment and says it is vital to cut back on military expenditure.

The municipal elections are seen as the last trial of political strength before the May 21 general election.

V. BOIKOV

Amsterdam

KWON HI GEN: THE INTERESTS OF THE NATION WILL PREVAIL

In an interview he kindly granted Vladimir Godyna, a New Times correspondent, KWON HI GEN, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the U.S.S.R., deals with a number of questions bearing on the present situation in the Korean peninsula.

Comrade Ambassador, recently the Democratic People's Republic of Korea advanced a whole range of proposals designed to ease tension in the Korean peninsula and pave the way for the peaceful reunification of the country. Would you be so kind as to give our readers an insight into them?

Korea has been partitioned for more than 40 years now. Reunification is the single most pressing task confronting the nation.

The D.P.R.K.'s consistent stand has been to remove misunderstanding and mistrust between North and South, ease tension and reunify the country on the basis of three principles: the above objectives should be attained peacefully and independently; without outside interference; on the basis of national consolidation and through negotiations. Our government is doing everything to achieve this. Thanks to initiatives and sincere efforts on the part of the D.P.R.K., last year the North and South discussed economic questions, the Red Cross societies held negotiations, and parliamentarians established preliminary contacts in preparation for official interparliamentary talks. In his New Year address Comrade Kim Il Sung, our great leader, said that the dialogue must be stepped up, and expressed himself in favour of a North-South summit meeting as well as trilateral talks between the D.P.R.K., the U.S. and South Korea.

Desiring to ease tension in the Korean peninsula and create favourable conditions for dialogue, the D.P.R.K. government unilaterally decided not to conduct any large-scale military exercises on its territory as of February 1, 1986, and pledged to discontinue all military manoeuvres while the North and South were engaged in talks. We proposed to the United States and the South Korean authorities that they assume a similar commitment.

The proposals the D.P.R.K. advanced, proceeding as they do from the situation in the Korean peninsula, are fully in keeping with the desires of the Korean people and all other peace-loving peoples of the world. They have been actively supported by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and by progressive forces worldwide.

Washington and Seoul have responded characteristically to your country's peaceful proposals.

You are referring, of course, to the U.S.-South Korean Team Spirit-86 military exercises, which are little short of provocation. The annual joint U.S.-South Korean manoeuvres are a manifestation of aggressive U.S. imperialist strategy with respect to Korea and the whole of Asia. In effect, this is a dress rehearsal for a preemptive war designed to establish control over Korea. Statements by the U.S. and South Korea to the effect that their joint military exercises are of a traditional and purely defensive character are quite simply an attempt to conceal their aggressive purpose and mislead public opinion.

Under the pretext of defence against "the threat of an attack from the North," U.S. imperialists are trying to legitimize the occupation of South Korea and disguise the offensive character of the exercises.

The government of the D.P.R.K. has repeatedly and explicitly declared that it has no intention of attacking the South or reunifying the country by armed force. The United States and the South Korean regime, on the other hand, apparently incline to a military solution. Are not the Team Spirit exercises, conducted each year on a mounting scale, evidence of this? In 1976, when the U.S. and South Korea first conducted manoeuvres under this code name, 46,000 officers and men were involved. Today more than 200,000 are taking part in them. The number of operations carried out for training has also increased—from 10 to more than 20. U.S. and South Korean staff officers have worked out a detailed offensive strategy. In 1983, for every defensive operation, the forces executed eight offensive operations. And Chun Doo Hwan confirmed this. "From now on," he said, "thanks to the operations we are working on, the military exercises have been acquiring an actively offensive character." During the Team Spirit-83 manoeuvres Robert Sennewald, commander of the U.S. forces in South Korea, said with typically military bluntness: "If necessary, we shall wedge deep into North Korean territory." And Rear Admiral La Rocque, ret., reaffirmed that these exercises simulated nuclear warfare.

At present there are 1,000 nuclear weapon units in South Korea. This means that there is one such lethal unit per less than 100 square kilometres of South Korean territory. As far as the deployment of all types of nuclear charge is concerned, their concentration in South Korea exceeds that in the NATO countries by four to one.

In the course of these exercises the joint forces are trained to deal a "first strike" at the D.P.R.K. The provocative character of the manoeuvres is best manifested in their scale, the types of weapon and purpose of operations. I have already said that some 200,000 officers and men of the U.S. and South Korean forces have been committed to action in the Team Spirit-86 exercises. Aircraft carriers, strategic bombers and missiles have been used in them. The forces have been trained to carry out landing operations, cross rivers, transport manpower and equipment by air, and engage in commando missions. The exercises are being conducted in close proximity to the demarcation line separating North Korea from the South and, therefore, constitute a direct threat to the D.P.R.K.

The aggressive intrigues of our enemies in the Korean peninsula have aggravated tension. In this context war may break out at any moment. We must be on the alert. In view of the grave situation that has arisen, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Korean People's Army has issued an order to all army units, security forces, units of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Volunteer Corps and Young Red Guards to maintain heightened revolutionary vigilance and combat and mobilizational readiness. The D.P.R.K. has condemned the aggressive military exercises and demanded their immediate cessation and the withdrawal

THE ALBANIAN GOLD AFFAIR

Tirana is asking London to return the Albanian gold kept in British vaults. How did the gold fall into British hands and why is London refusing to give it back to its rightful owner?

At dead of night in the autumn of 1943 a column of heavily guarded lorries sped through the streets of Rome, occupied by the nazis after the capitulation of fascist Italy. They were carrying an unusual cargo, the gold reserves of the National Bank of Albania. The nazis were losing no time in taking the gold to Germany.

The National Bank of Albania, founded in 1925 with the assistance of Italian financial groups, had the exclusive right to mint gold Albanian francs and issue paper money. Based in Rome, it opened branches in Tirana, Shkoder, Durres and some other Albanian towns. The bank continued its operations even after fascist Italy annexed Albania in April 1939. Albania was formally "united" with Italy and the Italian King Victor Emmanuel proclaimed king of Albania.

In the spring of 1945, when the Third Reich had collapsed, the Albanian gold was discovered by allied troops in a salt mine in the south of Germany. In accordance with international law and the Paris agreement on reparation concluded by the allies on January 14, 1946, all the gold reserves looted by the nazis had to be returned to their former owners. The implementation of this agreement was entrusted to a commission made up of representatives of the United States, Britain and France. The commission officially recognized the Albanian government's legal claim to the gold recovered in Germany, which weighed, according to Albanian press reports, in excess of 2,454 kg. But the final decision on the return of the treasure to Albania was dragged out, and it was handed over to Britain for safekeeping.

Shortly afterwards, however, London froze the gold reserves, taking advantage of an incident which occurred on October 22, 1946, when two British destroyers, the Saumarez and the Volage, hit mines in the Channel of Corfu and sank not far from the Albanian port of Saranda.

In the early postwar years a number of vessels struck mines in the coastal waters of European countries. Though the waterways were mineswept, it was for a long time impossible to ensure safe navigation. Indeed, wartime mines are still found in the sea today. In spite of this, however, the British government seized upon the incident to discredit Albania. It was accused of having laid the mines, and London demanded that Tirana pay damages. The absurdity of this charge was obvious from the outset, as at the time Albania possessed neither sea mines nor the facilities to lay them.

In January 1947, after a number of crude provocations, including the incursion of British naval vessels into Albanian territorial waters, the British government lodged a complaint with the U.N. Security Council against Albania, claiming that it had endangered peace and international security. On examination this slanderous charge was seen to be utterly groundless. In the Security Council Soviet representative Andrei Gromyko said that the British charges were totally unfounded and that the Security Council had no grounds to declare Albania guilty. The Soviet Union vetoed the anti-Albanian resolution submitted by Britain. Taking advantage of their majority in the Security Council, however, the Western countries adopted a recommendation that the Anglo-Albanian conflict be

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from South Korea of U.S. forces together with their arms, including nuclear weapons.

In this context, the steps the D.P.R.K. has taken are natural measures of self-defence in the face of hostile warlike demonstrations. Our legitimate steps are designed to stave off the threat of war and preserve peace.

U.S. imperialists and their South Korean puppets hope our vigilance will be relaxed so that they will be able to attack us. That is why, while working for peace and the reunification of the country, we are maintaining extraordinary revolutionary vigilance. We must be prepared to foil all the intrigues of the enemy.

In what way can the Team Spirit exercises affect North-South dialogue?

We favour broad and fruitful talks, including summit talks. Our ultimate purpose is peace and the reunification of the country. But it is already now necessary to create favourable conditions for dialogue and try to ease tension in the Korean peninsula.

However, the South Korean side is merely talking about dialogue, whereas in fact it has been doing its utmost to hinder an improvement in relations between North and South. It is building up tension and sparing no effort to perpetuate the division of the country.

Talks are pointless, because South Korea is engaged in sabre rattling. Even if they had been continued, it would have been impossible to achieve success under these circumstances. That is why our side decided to suspend all talks—the economic discussions, the

considered by the International Court of Justice.

In April 1949 the International Court of Justice in The Hague dismissed as unproved the charge that Albania had laid mines in the Channel of Corfu. At the same time the court said that the Albanian authorities could not but have known of the presence of mines. On these grounds it ruled by a majority of votes that Albania was responsible for the sinking of two British destroyers. Five of the sixteen judges, including those from the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia, did not agree with this arbitrary decision and recorded their own opinion.

In December 1949 the court, exceeding its powers as a U.N. body, ruled that Albania must pay Britain over £840,000 in compensation. The Albanian government understandably rejected the decision as unlawful.

In subsequent years Tirana repeatedly demanded that Britain return the gold reserves to Albania. The Albanian government, the newspaper Zeri i Popullit wrote in May 1980, had publicly demonstrated that the country was not guilty of the Corfu incident and the damage suffered by the British vessels in the channel, and declared that Albania "has never recognized and will never recognize the International Court ruling on this question." The 8th Congress of the Albanian Party of Labour in November 1981 again stressed: "The British government should immediately return the gold to Albania together with the interest on its arbitrary use."

However, London continues to ignore this demand. British newspapers advance all kinds of conditions and reservations and now even claim that the exact quantity of gold belonging to Albania is not known. The London Times wrote in August 1985 that "it is not known precisely how much of the gold, worth around £44 million at current prices, belongs to Albania" and that the gold in question can be released only by consent of all three members of the tripartite commission (the U.S., Britain and France). As if the commission had not recognized Albania's lawful right to it in the early postwar years!

The affair has been drawn out unnecessarily. The validity of Albania's demand for the return of the gold, which is the property of the Albanian people, must be evident to every disinterested observer.

G. MITKEVICH

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negotiations between the Red Cross societies, and so on. And it is the U.S. and Seoul authorities who are wholly responsible for the cessation of North-South dialogue.

Despite this, in principle we are in favour of dialogue. We are confident that the interests of the Korean nation will prevail. We would like to hope that after the Team Spirit-86 manoeuvres are over a situation will arise where it will be possible to renew the dialogue.

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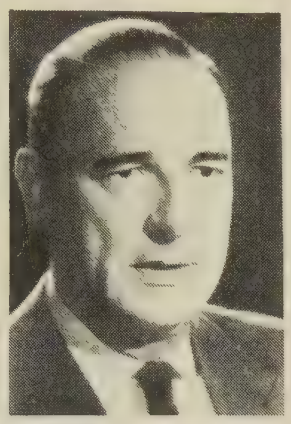
PEOPLE ON THE WORLD SCENE

JACQUES CHIRAC



Jacques Chirac, the new Prime Minister of France, was born in Paris on November 29, 1932, into the family of an executive who managed a number of industrial plants. He received his higher education at the Institute of Political Studies in Paris and later graduated from the elite National School of Administration.

In 1962 Jacques Chirac became an adviser to Georges Pompidou, then head of the French government. In 1967-68 he held the post of Secretary of State for Social Affairs in the Pompidou cabinet. From 1969 to 1974, when Pompidou was President of France, Jacques Chirac was a member of every successive cabinet as Secretary of State for Economic and Financial Affairs, Minister Delegate in Charge of Relations with Parliament, Minister of Agriculture and, finally, in 1974, as Minister of the Interior.

At the presidential elections in May 1974, following Georges Pompidou's death, Jacques Chirac actively supported the candidature of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who represented the Right-of-Centre group and who, on becoming President, appointed Chirac head of government, a post he held till August 1976 when friction between him and the President compelled him to resign.

Thereafter Chirac concentrated on the reorganization of the Gaullist Union of Democrats in Defence of the Republic. In December 1976 he became chairman of the party, renamed the Alliance for the Republic (RPR). The RPR has a membership of over 600,000. It is a moderate Right-wing party, most of its members being petty and middle bourgeoisie, civil servants and retired servicemen. When in power, the RPR established itself in the upper echelons of the state machinery and local government bodies. The party discarded a number of Gaullist socio-economic practices aimed at papering over the contradictions between labour and capital.

In 1977 Jacques Chirac was elected Mayor of Paris and reelected in 1983. This was seen as a prelude to his ascent to the highest levels of French political life. He has been a deputy in the National Assembly from Corrèze Department in Central France since 1967.

At the parliamentary elections on March 16, 1986, the RPR won 150 seats in the National Assembly. The President asked Jacques Chirac, as the leader of the largest party in the new parliamentary majority, to form a cabinet.

In the field of home affairs, Chirac professes his adherence to the state institutions of the Fifth Republic. In the course of the election campaign, the RPR put forward a platform which provided for the denationalization of companies and banks that came under state control in 1981, a free hand for private capital, the lifting of price restrictions, a tougher social policy, and the curtailment of trade union rights.

The head of the new French government has declared that France will pursue an independent foreign policy, stressed his adherence to the North Atlantic bloc and his intention to expedite European integration.

In 1975 he paid an official visit to the Soviet Union as head of government.

Jacques Chirac is married with two children. His wife, Bernadette Chirac, is general counsellor of Corrèze Department.

"They are SOBs, of course, but they're our SOBs," an American President is reported to have said of dictators of ultra-reactionary but pro-American governments in Central America. Nowadays no one ventures to express himself in such terms. The more diplomatic term "friendly regimes" has been adopted. Under that heading any dictatorship, no matter how much blood it has on its hands, can expect to get U.S. money and weapons, not to speak of American military advisers. Also "made-in-U.S.A." instruments of torture to "maintain" stability. The Administration, says a report issued by U.S. public organizations, is a vociferous apologist of "friendly" governments which are guilty of the most flagrant violations of human rights.

"Our SOBs" help one another. Haitian police were trained in Chile, the Chilean, in South Africa. Chile buys missiles and guns in South Africa and now South Africa is to get cluster bombs from Pinochet. All with the sole objective of remaining in power. And if they do not succeed or if the "friends" become a bit too odious, Washington tries to have them changed in good time. There are always some spare SOBs in stock. Witness Haiti. However, such moves do not change the situation.

Tell me who your friends are, Uncle Sam...

AMBASSADOR BARNES AGAINST PINOCHET?

A draft resolution on the situation in Chile has been submitted to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights. This time the "accuser" (believe it or not) is the U.S. Administration, which has suddenly discovered that General Pinochet is ruling Chile not with the consent of the people as a tyrant friendly to the U.S. should, but exclusively with the aid of "torture and terror."

Actually there is nothing surprising in all this. Washington knew very well what it was doing when it systematically torpedoed every attempt by the United Nations to impose an international boycott on the junta. Washington knows what it is doing when it threatens to "go public against the beast."

It appears that the first to be disillusioned in the general was the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which was horrified by the voracious appetites of the man who has ruined Chile. Last year the junta pumped $1.1 billion in loans out of banks controlled by U.S. capital and is demanding another $723 million this year.

But since Washington is not accustomed to economizing funds for friendly dictators, the way it does for its own needy, the State Department simply paid no attention at first to the Treasury's annoyance. But when Shultz's department saw that Pinochet was rapidly losing control of Chile, Harry Barnes, a notorious "destabilizer" of regimes undesirable for Washington, was appointed U.S. Ambassador in Santiago. At first he merely hinted to Pinochet that it would be advisable for him to relinquish power to the "non-communist opposition" favoured by Washington, but when the general did not heed the "quiet diplomacy," Barnes sent the State Department a draft U.N. resolution exposing the junta.

According to the Christian Science Monitor, President Reagan considers the "painless" (from the standpoint of U.S. interests) replacement of Duvalier and Marcos to be his biggest foreign policy victory. The White House evidently wants developments in Chile not to exceed the bounds of the scenarios approved for Haiti and the Philippines.

V. TIMOREV

KEEPING A LOW PROFILE

From Israel a sensational bit of news: the Knesset by a majority of votes rejected a resolution on the annexation of occupied Arab territories in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. News agencies have hastened to spread the glad tidings far and wide: for the first time in its history the Zionist state was refraining from seizing other people's lands and forgetting its plans for a "Greater Israel"!

Far less publicity was given to a far more important event—the publication of a U.N. committee report concerning the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people which states that the annexation of the occupied Arab territories by Israel is virtually an accomplished fact. The report says that in February 1985 the Israelis controlled 52 per cent of the land in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, that 41 per cent of the land already "belonged" to the Zionist state, and 11 per cent was "indirectly" controlled by it, or, in other words, taken away on one or another pretext from the local population. Another noteworthy fact: by November 1983 the Israelis had built 267 colonial-type settlements on the Arab lands they had appropriated.

From another report, published (one month before the sensational Knesset decision) by the Palestinian Cooperation Institution for Social and Economic Development Affairs, it transpires that between 1967 and 1985 550,000 Palestinians had been virtually ejected from the occupied lands.

As for the latest Knesset decision, the main role here was played, strangely enough, by the Right-wing Likud bloc which defeated the resolution on annexation tabled by Geula Cohen, deputy from the ultra-Right Tehiya party. It will be recalled that the notorious Drobles Plan sponsored by the World Zionist Organization and providing for speeding up the colonization of the Arab territories appeared under a Likud administration.

What happened to the Likud! Nothing particular. A UPI correspondent suggests that the explanation is simple: the Likud leadership considers the present moment inopportune for annexation. Both Washington and Tel Aviv are doing their utmost today to impose an American-Israeli "peace" on the Arab peoples of the Middle East, to lure the Arab states onto the path of separate deals and surrender. And Washington obviously considers it inadvisable to risk an international scandal at such a moment.

Besides, why should the Knesset adopt decisions on the annexation of Arab territories which have to all intents and purposes, as the above-mentioned U.N. committee report says, already been annexed.

K. EVGENYEV

NEW TIMES

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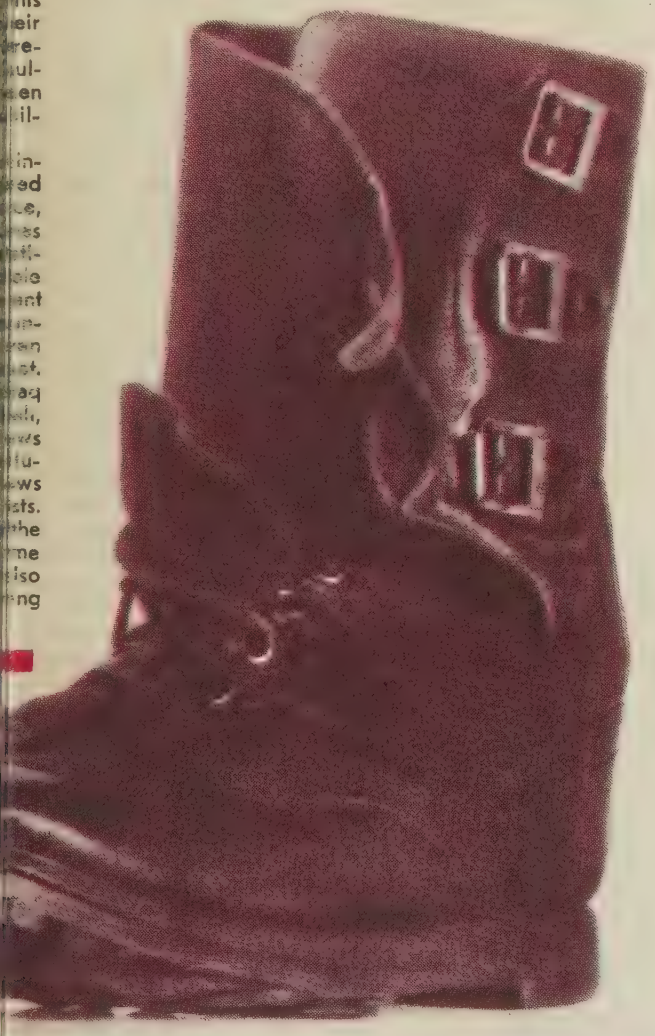
MILITOCRACY

executive positions at once in the government machinery and state corporations. How can it be otherwise since the president puts the military first. Late last year, before lifting martial law, Zia faced a serious problem, that of having to replace the military governors of provinces with civilians. He worked out a "democratic" compromise between the law and his own convictions, and named retired generals as governors.

In short, the Karachi justices are wasting their time. They fail to realize that the lifting of martial law does not mean the military are out. On the other hand, it does enable the U.S. to step up military and economic aid to "democratic" Pakistan. Latterly, Washington and Islamabad have been negotiating this matter. The new deal will amount to $6.2 billion.

Washington has definite designs on Pakistan. This would have been evident to the Karachi justices had they recently taken a short walk to the city's port where ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet headed by the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Enterprise stood at anchor. Since the question is one of military cooperation, the White House prefers to deal directly with army officers.

E. LVOV



IC FRIENDS"

when, on March 7, Pretoria lifted the state of emergency operative in many of the country's administrative districts since last July, everyone expected raves from the White House. Indeed, a State Department spokesman assured newsmen that the U.S. welcomed this move towards a climate in which negotiations about a new political order in the country could begin.

But the move was a mere formality. The decree the authorities issued to enforce total terror against all those involved in anti-racist unrest is still valid. As Louis le Grange, Minister of Law and Order, has admitted, amendments to the Internal Security Act are being hastily evolved. They will provide the security police and army units with a carte blanche. The murderers in uniform will be given still greater powers and, moreover, the authority to introduce local states of emergency at their own discretion.

Over the past few days punitive squads have staged massacres in the townships of Mamelodi, Atteridgeville, Jouberton, Linville and Kagiso, and at the Rand Mines pit.

According to patently doctored official statistics, since September 1984 upwards of 1,330 opponents of apartheid have been killed by the "guardians of law and order." An average of five people a day have been killed since the emergency was lifted.

South Africa is "a free country," Pieter Botha argues in a Washington Times interview.

South Africa is a democracy, comes the White House echo.

S. DEMIDOV

ARITHMETIC OF A DICTATORSHIP

South Korea's dictator Chun Doo Hwan is giving serious thought to university and college education. The situation on the campuses no longer suits him. The knowledge is wrong; and the students are wrong. As a result, he is having to arrange wholesale "examinations" and "tests" to weed out doubtful elements. In February the police staged round-ups at 129 universities and colleges. Those who were not arrested should have learnt this lesson.

What worries the dictator most are those forbidden subjects which "are being studied" by tens of thousands of students without the blessing of the authorities. The most popular subject at the moment is the collection of signatures to a petition calling for a revision of the constitution and for direct presidential elections. At present elections are held via a "college of electors" which the dictator himself has put together. Along with other South Korean democrats opposed to the regime, the students have no faith in Chun Doo Hwan's promise to hand over power in 1988 when his term expires. Unwilling to wait, they have resolved to conduct a referendum of their own and aim to collect 10 million signatures. In other words, 10 million votes against a dictatorship that has turned the country into a concentration camp for dissidents.

However, the authorities have clamped down on the signature campaign and are giving the students a taste of their own arithmetic. They hurled 3,000-odd police against a gathering of a thousand Seoul National University students, which comes to three policemen per student. That was followed by another piece of arithmetic—the jailing of 238 students. Hundreds of signature collectors have been imprisoned; opposition MPs have been detained by the police, and opposition leaders placed under house arrest.

According to U.S. State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb, the U.S. wants free and fair elections in South Korea, but how they are carried out is for South Koreans themselves to decide. Washington, which has stationed 40,000 GIs and a thousand nuclear warheads in South Korea, is giving Chun Doo Hwan the green light to any "forms and methods of democratization," that is, to any arithmetic of arrest, torture and harassment, just as six years ago it likewise gave the go-ahead to the Kwangju massacre in which more than 3,000 South Koreans were killed.

V. LYUBOVTSEV

After the defeat of militarist Japan in World War II the victor countries resolved to bring the major Japanese war criminals to trial. In the following interview granted to New Times reporter Leonid Mlechin, Professor MARK RAGINSKY, LL.D., discusses the Tokyo and Khabarovsk trials, the crimes committed by the Japanese military and political leaders and the reasons why many of the criminals escaped punishment.

THE TOKYO AND KHABAROVSK TRIALS—A RETROSPECT

New Times: The Nuremberg war crimes tribunal and the historical judgement it passed on nazism are well known the world over. The same cannot be said of the Tokyo and Khabarovsk trials, of which less has been said and written. Latterly some quarters in the West and in Japan are questioning the legal validity of both of these tribunals. How would you evaluate this in the light of the historical facts?

Raginsky: Prosecution of the Japanese war criminals was one of the terms of the capitulation of Japan and followed from the Potsdam Proclamation of the United States, Britain and China, to which the U.S.S.R. acceded. The proclamation said: "We do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals. There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world." And although immediately after the war tendencies to depart from wartime agreements made themselves felt in the United States, pressure from world public opinion and the firm stand taken by the Soviet Union led to the setting up of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East.

New Times: How did this tribunal differ from that in Nuremberg?

Raginsky: As distinct from Nuremberg, where there were four judges—from the U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Britain and France—the Far East tribunal consisted of representatives of eleven states that had suffered from Japanese aggression: U.S.S.R., U.S.A., China, Britain, France, Australia, the Netherlands, India, Canada, New Zealand, and the Philippines. The question of who was to be president of the tribunal was decided unilaterally by Washington (unlike the procedure in Nuremberg). The commander of the U.S. occupation forces, General Douglas MacArthur, appointed the Australian judge, Sir William Webb, to the post. Moreover, the statute of the tribunal was endorsed not by the victor powers, but by MacArthur alone. It should be noted that as a result of such a procedure the Mongolian People's Republic was excluded from the tribunal, although it too was a victim of Japanese aggression and had made a no small contribution to the defeat of the Kwantung Army.

All told, 28 defendants were put on trial. Two of them, former Foreign Minister Matsuoka and former Navy Minister Nagano, died while the trial was still going on. Okawa, one of the ideologues of Japanese fascism and racism, was certified as mentally deranged (the diagnosis was syphilitic meningoencephalitis; he had suffered from syphilis for 30 years). Prince Konoe, who as Prime Minister had led the country into the war in the Pacific, was given an opportunity to commit suicide before arrest.

The list of defendants was far from complete. MacArthur's headquarters saved many prominent politicians who had masterminded Japanese aggression and determined the course steered by the country. In the dock were only the most odious figures who could no longer take part in the political life of postwar Japan.

MacArthur released many of the leading war criminals who had been arrested after the surrender. As regards heads of the Japanese monopolies, the zaibatsu, U.S. chief prosecutor Joseph Keenan was not content with their release but actually tried to justify this "theoretically." He argued that if in Germany the industrialists helped Hitler into the saddle, the Japanese bankers and big businessmen, though they played the same role, did so only at gunpoint. The release of the leaders of the Japanese military-industrial complex, as became clear later, was an important element in the reversal of course by the Americans, who saw in Japan not a former enemy but an ally in the pursuance of anti-Soviet policy.

New Times: Where was the Tokyo trial held and when?

Raginsky: The International Military Tribunal for the Far East sat in 1946-48 in what had been the building of the war ministry. The choice of premises was significant: it was in this building that the plans of the aggression, for which those who inspired it now had to answer, were drawn up. Today the building is not easy to find, overshadowed as it is by giant skyscrapers. There is nothing there to remind the people of Tokyo of the historic event that took place here four decades ago.

The first session of the tribunal opened on May 3, 1946. Sentence was pronounced on November 4, 1948, after the judges had conferred for six months and 19 days. The reading of the judgement was not completed until November 12. This was not surprising considering that the judgement ran to 1,214 pages. Each of the 28 defendants had two defence counsels, one Japanese and the other American, who in turn had their aids. All told, more than 90 lawyers took part in the trial.

For 30 months and two weeks the tribunal unravelled the tangle of grievous crimes committed by the leaders of militarist Japan. A total of 818 open hearings were held and 4,356 pieces of documentary evidence and the written testimony of 1,194 witnesses were examined; 419 witnesses appeared in court. The record of the trial amounted to 48,412 typescript pages.

New Times: How would you sum up in brief the crimes of the leaders of militarist Japan bent on world dominion?

Raginsky: The war brought disaster to the Japanese people themselves, and for this too the defendants in the Tokyo trial had to answer. Some 2.5 million Japanese were killed in action and the civilian death toll amounted to 668,000.

Still more costly was the war for the peoples who fell victim to Japanese aggression. Particularly heavy were the losses of China, where ten million died. The heaviest losses in Southeast Asia were suffered by Indonesia, which lost two million lives, and the Philippines, with a toll of 1.1 million. The Japanese army seized Hongkong, Malaya, the Philippines, Indonesia and Burma, virtually occupied Thailand, and was getting ready to invade India and Australia.

In Ribbentrop's archives we found the minutes of a conference with Hitler held on December 14, 1941, which was attended by the Japanese ambassador in Berlin Oshima. The record contains this passage: "Oshima said that after the capture of Singapore the Japanese forces are to turn towards India. In this connection he believes that Germany and Japan should synchronize their operations. It would be a good thing if at the time Japan attacks India from the east, Germany threatened it from the west."

The Japanese army was ruthless, indeed, inhuman. Without any military necessity it bombed densely populated quarters of big cities—Manila, Singapore, Rangoon and Calcutta. Thousands of noncombatants were killed and tens of thousands left homeless. The Japanese army treated prisoners of war as brutally as did the Wehrmacht: they were gunned down, bayonetted, burned alive, beheaded, or buried alive. In the Philippines, American prisoners of war were marched through the jungle to San Fernando and on the way thousands were killed by the convoys. The remainder died of hunger and disease. No wonder this tragic journey came to be called the "death march."

The Japanese set up their variant of the "new order" in the occupied territories. Asian countries deprived of their independence were forced to enter the "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere." It was Japan that was to prosper by plundering all of Asia. How did these plans differ from those of the Hitlerites?

New Times: Today Japanese historians deny that the imperial army committed crimes during the war. For instance, it is claimed that there was no massacre in Nanking. What evidence did the International Tribunal go by in ascertaining the guilt of the defendants?

The building where the International Military Tribunal for the Far East sat forty years ago.

In the dock at the Khabarovsk trial—war criminals guilty of preparing war against the U.S.S.R. and of developing and using bacteriological weapons. In the first row (right) is former commander of the Kwantung Army General Yamada.

Raginsky: The judgement goes on record that mass killings of prisoners of war, civilian internees, the sick, the wounded, the medical personnel of hospitals, and noncombatants in general were the common practice throughout the Pacific war. Torture of every kind, the killing of fliers taken prisoner, and even cannibalism—all this was revealed by the evidence submitted to the tribunal. The killings were done in conformity with special orders issued from higher echelons and the general staff of the army.

The tribunal established that the atrocities were of an organized character. The war minister actually issued an order forbidding servicemen returning home from China to pass on any information about their treatment of the Chinese noncombatant population and prisoners of war.

The Japanese forces in Central China were under the command of General Iwane Matsui, a member of the Supreme Council for the Direction of the War, who was responsible for the Nanking massacre in which more than 200,000 were killed. At the trial Matsui denied having had anything to do with this massacre without precedent in history.

A captain of the medical corps of the Chinese army, Ling Tingfang, who was taken prisoner by the Japanese in Nanking, testified before the tribunal that during the night of December 16, 1937, for instance, the Japanese had machine-gunned 5,000 prisoners of war and thrown the bodies into the Yangzi.

Within a few months the Japanese occupying forces in the Philippines killed more than 130,000 noncombatants and prisoners of war, local and American. During a massacre in Hongkong, the Japanese seized a military hospital at St. Stephen's college,

bayonetted the sick and wounded, and raped and then killed the nurses. On orders from the commander of the Kwantung Army, General Yamada, a large number of Soviet civilians were killed in Hailar on August 9, 1945. There is more than abundant evidence of the outrages committed on occupied territories by the imperial army. The tribunal went on record that 650 pieces of written eyewitness evidence of the atrocities committed by Japanese militarists in different countries had been submitted in addition to the testimony of witnesses who had appeared in court. The majority of the members of the tribunal found it necessary to collect all the data on atrocities established at the trial in a two-volume appendix to the judgement.

New Times: Already at the time of the Tokyo tribunal it was known that Japan had developed bacteriological weapons, tested them on human beings, and widely used them in China. Were these crimes examined in Tokyo?

Raginsky: The Japanese war criminals guilty of bacteriological war preparations should have been tried in Tokyo. However, Keenan, acting on instructions from Washington and MacArthur's headquarters, concealed the information he had about the sinister Detachment 731. A member of MacArthur's staff claimed that a "thorough" investigation had been made but no evidence had been found of Japan using or preparing to use bacteriological weapons. Today we know that precisely at that time U.S. experts were studying materials obtained from the chief of Detachment 731, General Ishii, with a view to using the detachment's gruesome experience in a future war with the Soviet Union.

The need to bring also this group of criminals to justice prompted the holding in the Soviet Union of a special trial. It took place in Khabarovsk over December 25-30, 1949. In the dock were 12 former officers of the Kwantung Army and Detachment 731. The case was heard by the military tribunal of the Maritime Military District. In the course of this open trial it was incontrovertibly proved that the command of the Kwantung Army, in conformity with instructions from the war ministry and the general staff, had been preparing for bacteriological warfare. This barbarous means of mass destruction was used against China.

New Times: In the West and in Japan both of these trials have been qualified as "acts of revenge" which it is pointless to recall. What in your opinion is the significance of sentences passed nearly 40 years ago?

Raginsky: The International Military Tribunal for the Far East not merely indicted 28 leaders of militarist Japan for their crimes (that they were crimes none of the victor powers doubted). It also exposed the aggressive nature of Japanese militarism and revealed for all to see the plans of the Tokyo leaders of the time to bring, together with nazi Germany and fascist Italy, the whole world under their domination. It was for this purpose that Japan unleashed war in the Pacific and attacked neighbouring countries in violation of international law and bilateral commitments.

At the closing stage of the trial, Soviet prosecutor A. N. Vasilyev emphasized that the purpose of the tribunal's judgement was "to condemn Japanese aggression against peace-loving nations, to mete out severe punishment to the major Japanese war criminals and thereby help to transform Japan into a peaceful democratic state and to safeguard the world against new aggression; to issue a warning to those who, blinded by the insane notions of world domination, conquest of other peoples' lands and subjugation of nations, might seek to accomplish something similar to the objective of the criminal activity of Hitler's Japanese accomplices."

These words have not lost their timeliness to this day. Today too the international trial in Tokyo should serve as a warning to those who, in defiance of the lessons of history, are impelling the world towards a new war. To forget history is to begin repeating the past.

In late December 1948, with the help of the above-mentioned Keenan, General MacArthur released all those detained on charges of crimes against peace. A commission was actually set up at MacArthur's headquarters to deal with the early release of war criminals. By the end of 1949, 45 of them were already set free. And on March 7, 1950, MacArthur issued his circular No. 5 which authorized the early release of all war criminals serving sentences.

After the occupation was over the rehabilitation of the killers was undertaken by Right-wing quarters in the Tokyo corridors of power who are still singing paeans of praise to the imperial army. In 1970 alone, 12,674 former servicemen were awarded decorations posthumously, and 381 were given honorary titles. What is this if not wholesale exoneration of those who directed and gave effect to the criminal designs of Japanese militarists?

It is with concern that we observe today the revival of Japanese militarism. It is now more important than ever to recall the sentences passed in Tokyo and Khabarovsk on the forerunners of today's militarists. Let them remember how military adventures end! ■

The village of Hidegkut (Hungarian for "cold well") has long been assimilated into the Budapest suburbs. As its arable area dwindled under the persistent encroachment of the city's new housing developments, the local farming cooperative, Rozmaring, faced the need to seek a new specialization. Such a readjustment was made possible thanks to the construction, five years ago, of a biotechnological factory equipped to grow saplings from vegetable cells. Cloning—the production of plants from cells—was raised to a commercial level under the guidance of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Biological Centre. Construction was financed by a number of neighbouring cooperatives and state farms which formed an economic amalgamation called Meriklon.

Cloning for the Farms

I walked down a long corridor and went into factory shops where white-coated women were manipulating retorts, test tubes and autoclaves behind plate-glass partitions. Arrayed on metal shelves were hundreds of plastic-capped glass jars filled with white jelly—the nutritive substratum. In some of them green shoots had sprouted.

"In Hungary cloning is already practised in many biological laboratories," Ferenc Föglein, director of the Meriklon amalgamation, told me. "At our factory we use this achievement of science to increase farm produce output by promptly replicating virus-free planting stock."

Meriklon organized its first cloning lines for carnation growing. Now the Rozmaring cooperative runs more than fifty florist shops in the capital. Later, virus-free seedlings were obtained for grape growing. At the factory I was shown one of the lines on which the multiplication of a new variety of grape was in progress. Within three weeks of being planted in jelly, clones sprout tiny shoots which are removed under a microscope and transferred to greenhouses where they take root.

"The high sterility of planting stock makes it possible to grow vines which remain perfectly healthy on plantations for up to 20 years," Ferenc Föglein said.

We then walked to a recently launched virus-free potato line. It starts with a nutritive solution containing tiny, barely visible parts of the germinating potatoes' eyes (approximately one tenth of a millimetre in size). The rapidly multiplying cells of the shoot tops contain no viruses even if the rest of the plant is contaminated with them. When they have grown strong enough, the shoots are

THE WIZARDS OF MERIKLON

Fruits of Hungarian biotechnology

VLADIMIR GERASIMOV

The Comprehensive Programme of scientific and technological progress of the CMEA member states for the period up to the year 2000 sets objectives for co-operation in the field of biotechnology which include a dramatic increase in food production. The report below concentrates on Hungary's effort towards attaining this objective.

removed from the jars and planted into the soil. Meriklon already produces such virus-free planting stock at a rate of 2.5 million seedlings a year. This is impressive, but the efficiency of the technique is further increased by growing mini-tubers at the same time.

Using special methods and fertilizers, pea-sized tubers are obtained in the same tiny jars which are, in fact, miniature greenhouses. The tubers are subsequently planted in soil where they grow to the size of hazelnuts.

In a basement-like storage room (dark and with the air temperature maintained at a steady +2°C) I was shown white sacks of tender pink potato mini-tubers resembling coated almonds in appearance.

"One such two-kilo sackful is enough to sow a hectare of land. It is equivalent to three tons of ordinary seed potatoes." The director poured a few mini-tubers out onto his palm. "They are easier and cheaper to store and transport, which is also an enormous advantage."

So far Hungary buys 4-5 million dollars' worth of high-quality seed potatoes a year from Holland. Meriklon experts are of the opinion that their own virus-free seedlings and mini-tubers can now compete with any similar product on the world market. By 1990, Meriklon and its partners are to meet 90 per cent of Hungary's seed potato requirements. A proportion of the planting stock will be exported. Orders have already come in from Czechoslovakia and the United States.

"We should like to export our seed potatoes to the Soviet Union as well," Ferenc Föglein said. "Now that the socialist countries have drawn up joint programmes of scientific and technological progress for the next fifteen years—including that in the field of biotechnology—it is especially important for us to strengthen links with our Soviet partners and exchange experience with them."

Besides potatoes and grapes, Meriklon grows other test-tube fruit and vegetables, such as apples, quinces, peppers, onions, bananas, wild strawberries, as well as decorative plants and gerberas—the now fashionable flowers of which one variety was obtained from Riga.

Mini potato tubers. There are enough here to plant a fair-sized vegetable garden.

Meriklon experts are tackling the problems involved in introducing biological methods of plant life protection. They plan to increase the commercial output of certain varieties of worm, some microscopic specimens of which I was shown in a laboratory. These worms attack the larvae of soil-dwelling pests, and live in symbiosis with bacteria that promote plant development and growth. Now Meriklon's farms are preparing to build new microbiological production lines.

Computer-Aided Gardening

A conglomeration of buildings of varying sizes caught my eye in Szeged, in a new district on the bank of the Tisza. Its main entrance is decorated with an enormous glittering openworked metal sphere—the sculptor's conception of a molecule. The buildings house the Biological Centre, in which fundamental research in various fields, biotechnology included, is carried out.

"Biotechnology has become a major trend in our country's scientific and technological progress," Professor Lajos Alföldi, director of the centre, told me. "We expect it to help us dramatically increase food production and solve many problems facing our health system and medicine."

Lajos Alföldi is also the head of the centre's Institute of Genetics. The directors of the centre are replaced every five years. The post is held, in turn, by the heads of the centre's five institutes: biophysics, biochemistry, enzymology, physiology and genetics. It was natural that Lajos Alföldi should have dwelt mostly on his own field. Fundamental research into the plant cell has given birth to genetic engineering—now an applied science. Today the centre's geneticists can alter the cellular structure of a heat-loving plant in such a way as to make it endure temperatures as low as —3°C for as long as ten hours. This achievement by Hungarian geneticists has been patented in dozens of countries. Scientists of the centre have bred a number of frost-resistant varieties of maize.

Biotechnology owes its progress to the discovery of the way the protein enzymes that stimulate cell growth work. Thanks to these enzymes, which decompose hydrocarbon, cheap sugar has been obtained from maize. Europe's first sugar refinery to depend on biochemical energy went into operation in Szeged back in 1981. The refinery processes maize into liquid starch, sugar, alcohol and livestock fodder.

"The centre's biophysicists," the director informed me, "have developed computer-controlled equipment that makes it possible to grow plants without soil. Automatic devices spray-feed 7 or 8 nutritive macroelement compounds and a similar number of dissolved microelements onto the plants' root systems. The computer exercises strict control over their consumption: a plant gets exactly the amount of nutritives it needs at any given stage in its growth. Solution 'leftovers' are reabsorbed into the feeding tank. The new computerized automatic greenhouses will reduce the consumption of nutritive substances to a minimum."

Cellular technology is also used to breed highly productive livestock. In this field too the Szeged scientists are blazing new trails—while drawing on international experience, of course.

"We have still much to do before we attain the world's highest levels in research all along the line," Lajos Alföldi said. "But we try to keep track

of all the latest developments and often send our experts abroad. Today, for instance, thirty of our 150 research associates are working in laboratories in the Soviet Union, the U.S., the F.R.G., France, Britain and Sweden.

"We value high achievement. Therefore we emphasize discipline and a sense of responsibility. Talent needs no tutelage; what it needs is help, support, and every condition for creative work," Lajos Alföldi continued.

According to Alföldi, Szeged biologists are very interested in wider contacts with Soviet scientists. The Comprehensive Programme of scientific and technological progress of the CMEA member states for the period up to 2000 says that joint research and more purposeful exchanges of delegations would make for an earlier introduction of research findings into practice, and for much faster progress in the more important directions of biotechnology.

Microbes at Work

The biotechnological factory of the Dozsa farming cooperative in Dömsöd is already more than a year old. It is only an hour's drive from Budapest. The factory was built by the members of the cooperative themselves in a year and a half. Whatever scientific consultations it needs are readily provided by Gödöllö Agricultural University.

"We think it expedient to build such biotechnological factories near livestock farms, major vegetable stores and in the outskirts of population centres," said engineer Janos Juhasz, who showed me around. "Our farm, which keeps a thousand head of cattle, supplies about 12,000 tons of straw matting to the factory, plus 8,000 tons of waste matter from pigsties, vineyards, orchards and fields. From nearby villages we bring in dry maize stalks and sawdust. This amounts to 20,000 tons of biomass a year which we process, first of all, into methane which is used as a fuel, an equivalent of 440-500 tons of petroleum and, second, into 18,000 tons of high-quality organic fertilizer. The methane is accumulated and kept in a gas container. We use it to heat livestock premises and homes in winter."

In Budapest I met Robert Kupper, general director of the Lamex foreign trade organization, which supplies complex structures. This organization affords the Dozsa cooperative access to the Soviet market.

"We offer our customers a choice of equipment for biotechnological gas factories of various capacities," Robert Kupper told me. "We have designs for biotechnological factories to be based on livestock farms keeping 200-500 head of cattle or on large farms with 10,000-12,000 head. Fermenters, compressors and gasholders for big factories can be built in two years. We have also designed biotechnological factories for processing river silt."

The Hungarian government has adopted a special programme for the comprehensive processing of biomass into fuel, fertilizer and fodder. Several methane-producing biotechnological factories are already in operation. Biotechnological mini-units intended for use on household plots and allotments are being experimented with. A new biotechnological research centre now being built in Gödöllö is to be opened next year. The Biotechnika amalgamation has been formed recently to expedite putting new biotechnological methods to practical use.

"In most cases it is impossible to utilize the results of fundamental research on a commercial scale right away," Zsuzsa Olah, director of the amalgamation, explained. "This requires intermediate, so-called applied, studies which research institutes do not do, and which industrial plants haven't yet taken up. So we have undertaken to carry out such studies. Being a self-supporting organization, we back only those research efforts which promise quick and rewarding returns. For this reason, we are economically interested in the early introduction of new biotechnological techniques."

Meriklon is expanding the scale of its operations. It is now the national coordinator of commercial cloning lines construction. Three more centres have been built on the same pattern.

"We shall build six more," Ferenc Föglein said. "Moreover, Hungary has signed a contract to build an industrialized cloning line in Cuba. We are to supply three industrial laboratories to Egypt, and one to Jordan. Our cooperation with the Soviet Union in the field of plant cloning is expanding."

Budapest

PEOPLE ON THE WORLD SCENE

CORAZON AQUINO

Corazon Aquino, the new President of the Republic of the Philippines, was born on January 25, 1933, in Tarlac Province into a family belonging to the Cojuangco clan, which is well represented in the country's wealthiest and most influential quarters. Mrs Aquino, who has degrees in philology and law received in New York and Manila, developed her political views under the influence of her husband Benigno Aquino, the prominent politician and leading political opponent of Ferdinand Marcos. During the state of emergency (1972-80) Benigno Aquino was held in prison on charges of anti-government activity and "political murders." In 1980 he was allowed out of the country for treatment in the United States. On the day of his return to the Philippines in August 1983 Benigno Aquino was assassinated at Manila Airport. The murder was ascribed to supporters of Ferdinand Marcos.

Her husband's violent death, which aroused a tidal wave of public sympathy, and her criticism of the ruling regime brought her support from the poor sections of the population, though she had never before been active in politics. The Catholic church and a number of mass organizations actively backed her at the pre-term presidential elections, held on February 7. Corazon Aquino won a considerable following among the middle and big bourgeoisie opposed to the Marcos regime. At the estimate of the opposition, she beat Marcos by 1.8 million votes. The military, headed by Defence Minister Juan Enrile, took her side, and on February 25 Ferdinand Marcos stepped down and left the country. On the same day Corazon Aquino was proclaimed President and formed a new government.

In her first statements as President she voiced her commitment to fighting corruption and abuses on the part of the state officialdom and the military, overcoming the profound financial and economic crisis, and raising welfare standards, and declared her support for making peace with insurgent units of the New People's Army. One of her first moves was to release all political prisoners, including the leaders of the New People's Army.

Corazon Aquino has said that the Philippines will maintain relations with all states irrespective of their social system while preserving and promoting close relations with the U.S. The new President was evasive on the issue of U.S. military bases in the Philippines, referring to "the need" to keep them till 1991, the year in which the Philippine-American agreement expires, and said that the future of the bases would be negotiated with the United States.

Corazon Aquino has five children.

Who caused the oil price slump, and why?

OIL IN THE STRATEGY OF NEOCOLONIALISM

RUBEN ANDREASYAN, D.Sc. (Econ.)

Imperialism, especially American, has lately mounted a fierce counter-offensive against the developing countries, not least on the economic front, with the intention of depriving them of the gains they achieved in the seventies.

At the time, as part of the concerted pressure being brought to bear on the West, foreign mining concessions were nationalized almost all over the developing world, raw material prices rose sharply, and the industrialized states became more heavily dependent for raw material supplies on the former colonial periphery. The newly independent countries' share in world production increased, and they were able to launch a campaign for a new international economic order. The non-aligned movement gained in strength with the socialist community's active support. The newly independent states came to play a more important role in the world economy and international politics.

Widening Gap

Nevertheless, the developing countries did not succeed in putting an end to their economic dependence and winning a position of equality in the world capitalist economic system. They still remain a zone of low labour productivity and largely archaic social relations, with few centres of industry. They are just laying the foundations of modern industrial production, while the centres of capitalism are making further scientific and technological advances, and this continues to widen and deepen the gulf between economic development levels in the industrialized and developing countries.

Using its economic might and scientific and technological superiority, imperialism has created and perfected new forms of enslavement: technological, food and financial. It has managed to integrate the developing countries' economies yet more fully into the world capitalist economy and thus made them more vulnerable to market fluctuations.

The industrialized capitalist states have shifted to the developing countries much of the damage caused by the economic crisis of 1980-82, which had pushed the prices of the raw materials the Third World exports further down. With inflated interests on international credit rates, the developing countries' foreign debt increased to a trillion dollars. In an attempt to extricate themselves from the noose, they are compelled to pay their Western creditors with a constantly growing proportion of their national product. This frustrates their development plans and makes them still more dependent on imperialism. Taking advantage of the situation, the West demands that the Third World throw its economies open to transnational business.

In the counteroffensive against the newly independent countries, imperialism made use of the objective economic processes which began to unfold in the Western economy after the rise in the price of raw materials. The West took measures to economize on raw materials, develop resource-saving technologies and synthetic structural materials, recycle waste matter and extract its own minerals. This led to a reduction in the utilization of raw materials per unit of social product and diminished the West's dependence on supplies of raw materials from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Attack on OPEC

Similar processes were to be observed in the petroleum sphere. The raising of petroleum prices by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was a legitimate and economically justified move. Up to the early seventies, the monopolies had kept these prices down to a level that was tantamount to plunder so as to pay lower taxes to the countries where they had their concessions. Between 1960 and 1970 a barrel (159 litres) of Saudi oil cost a mere $1.8—and in fact even less. The monopolies made fabulous profits by selling finished petroleum products at exorbitant prices. During the two flareups of the energy crisis (from 1973 to 1974 and from 1979 to 1980) OPEC raised the price of petroleum to an economically justified level—the upper limit of solvent demand—bringing it to $34 a barrel. The supplier of any product would have done the same. That the volume of the demand dwindled fast due to a number of objective factors and manoeuvres on the part of the Western powers is a different matter.

Between 1974 and 1983, the use of petroleum per $1,000 of gross domestic product dropped from 470 to 320 kilos, and the share of oil in overall energy consumption between 1970 and 1984 shrank from 49 to slightly over 40 per cent. The capitalist world's oil products consumption in 1978-83 did not increase. Oil production dropped from 2.4 billion tons in 1979 to 2 billion in 1985, and now stands at the 1971 level. At the same time, oil production outside the OPEC zone—both in the developing countries not affiliated with it and in a number of Western states—began to climb rapidly. Seeking to prevent petroleum prices from plummeting, OPEC was compelled to play the role of a so-called "balancing supplier" and sharply decrease its petroleum output —from 1,535 million tons in 1979 to 792 million in 1985. Its share in the capitalist world's petroleum production diminished from 64 to 40 per cent, and in export—from 92 per cent in 1974 to about 60 per cent in 1985. This failed to put things right, however. By 1982, supply already exceeded demand, and there was a glut of petroleum resulting in a buyer's market.

In 1983-85, OPEC was compelled to reduce the price of petroleum to $28 a barrel. As a result, its members' aggregate incomes from petroleum sales decreased from $275 billion in 1980 to $157 billion in 1984.

All these adverse phenomena were the result not only of objective processes, but also of the deliberate policy of imperialism. Confronted with the task of undertaking costly oil deposit developments in Alaska and the North Sea in the early seventies, Western energy monopolies even tried in secret—with

the blessing of U.S. and British ruling circles—to push OPEC into raising petroleum prices. The second flareup of the energy crisis in 1979-81 was actually provoked by the American oil monopolies, which sought for a way to compensate for their inflation-caused losses.

At the same time, the existence of an alliance of developing countries on the vital strategic commodity market is quite unacceptable to Western ruling circles and monopolies. The same is true, on the whole, of OPEC's anti-imperialist policy, and its members' desire to determine the terms for the world petroleum trade. U.S., British, French and Dutch ruling circles and the International Oil Cartel monopolies can neither forget nor forgive their loss of control over oil sources and the economies and policies of a large group of newly independent countries. The West is displeased by the redistribution of the surplus value created in the capitalist world in favour of the OPEC countries and by the growth of their influence throughout the Third World. Imperialism regards this organization as a weakened but still stubborn enemy without the suppression of which it will not be possible to force the Afro-Asian and Latin American peoples to their knees. Undermining OPEC has become, therefore, a major component of imperialism's global strategy.

In pursuance of this, imperialism goes to any lengths: prejudicing Western public opinion against OPEC, resorting to blackmail, kindling differences between OPEC members, bullying some and cultivating others, and, last but not least, bringing economic pressure to bear on them. In 1974 the International Energy Agency—an "anti-OPEC" of sorts—was formed under U.S. auspices. Today the agency comprises 21 industrialized capitalist states and takes coordinated measures against OPEC. Worthy of special note is the 1979 decision to sharply increase the emergency oil reserves as a means of beating market prices down. At the same time, Britain and Norway started stepping up their own oil extraction and taking OPEC's traditional West European markets away from it. Between 1980 and 1985, Britain's oil production grew from 80 to 129 million tons and Norway's, from 24 to 38 million. OPEC tried to protest, called upon the British and Norwegians to show solidarity and deliberately reduced its oil output—but all to no avail.

Price Manipulation

In the early months of 1986, oil prices plummeted. They began to slide at the beginning of January, and towards mid-March the prices of petroleum supplied to oil refineries under regular agreements between sellers and buyers had dropped by half as compared with the beginning of December 1985. On the Rotterdam spot market, the price of Brent oil (Britain) dropped from $30.4 to $13-$15 a barrel; and the price of Isthmus oil (Mexico), delivered to the U.S., and of Fateh oil (Dubai) fell to $11-$11.5 a barrel over the same period. This is the world capitalist market's third major upheaval over the past 13 years, this time with prices dropping rather than rising. Considering that the U.S. dollar's purchasing power has fallen by more than half since 1970 owing to inflation, oil prices have in real terms gone down to $5-$7, or the October 1973 level.

All things considered, such a dramatic drop in prices was not caused by the actual ratio of supply and demand on the world market. At the beginning of December 1985 the price of light Arab oil, long regarded as a world reference standard, rose to $27.9 a barrel in Rotterdam—and this in a situation where OPEC had increased its petroleum output to 910 million tons (in per annum terms) last autumn, as against the established 800-million-ton quota, and other petroleum suppliers had also increased production. This was a typical pre-heating-season price rise, and a certain drop in oil prices was to be expected in spring—"certain" because oil production by Britain, OPEC's chief rival, has stopped growing since last spring when it had probably reached its peak.

Nevertheless, the Rotterdam petroleum market was feverish early in January. Chaos set in. Spot contract prices were the first to fall, with cash oil often unavailable. The New York exchange was also panic-stricken. The stocks of energy companies and of the banks associated with them—Rockefeller's Chase Manhattan included—began to fall.

Western experts explain the price slide by the resolution of the 76th OPEC conference, held early last December, to work for a fair share of the market. They also allude to Saudi Arabia's threat to maintain oil production at its quota level—217 million tons a year—while reducing the price to between $15 and $20 or even to $8 if Britain and Norway do not back OPEC's effort to stabilize the market and fail to reduce their oil output. Finally, they cite Reagan as saying that the U.S. has succeeded in forcing OPEC to its knees.

Admittedly it is as yet difficult to determine how exactly oil prices are beaten down because those who do it are careful to keep their operations secret.

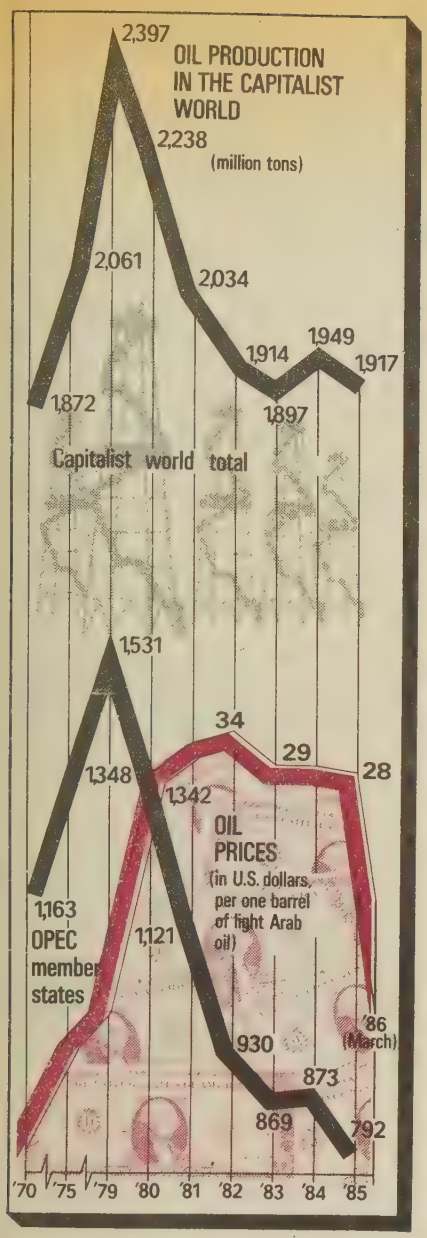
All we can do so far is ascertain who stands to gain.

The situation clearly benefits the U.S. more than any other country. According to Time magazine, "in Washington, the Reagan Administration hailed the price slide as a victory" and will not lift a finger to check the process. The two parallel processes—the continuous fall of the dollar since February 1985 and the slide in oil prices—have proved economically beneficial. They are being used to liven up the U.S. economy which is heading for another depression, to slow down inflation and, with the help of cheaper oil imports, to reduce the enormous balance of trade deficit ($148 billion in 1985). "As the price of oil and the value of the dollar continue to slide, one can almost feel the weight being lifted from the back of American industry," the newspaper Philadelphia Inquirer wrote on February 25. It was not for nothing that the Dow-Jones business activity index rose sharply in February to reach 1,697.71 points. Many U.S. research companies believe that the slide in oil prices will step up the GNP growth rate from 2.3 to 3 or more per cent in 1986. In the U.S. it would seem to be believed that low oil prices and the diminishing value of the dollar will stimulate economic growth in Western Europe and Japan as well, which, in turn, will help the capitalist economy sustain the cyclic recovery phase and prevent it from being hit by a new crisis this year.

The U.S. hopes, in particular, that this process will undermine and weaken OPEC's radical wing (especially Libya, Algeria and Nigeria), further worsen the balance of payments of such heavy debtors as Mexico, Indonesia, Venezuela, Algeria and Nigeria, plunge them deeper into debt and compel them to follow in the wake of Washington's foreign policy. Symptomatically, while bringing economic pressure to bear on Libya, its chief opponent in OPEC, the Americans are now threatening it with armed intervention. The U.S. ruling circles hope, and make no secret of it, that the price slide will also be detrimental to the Soviet Union which exports petroleum to the capitalist market.

In pursuance of its plans, Washington has deliberately allowed life to be made difficult for U.S. oil companies, which suffered a substantial loss of profit. Medium-sized companies, deeply in debt and compelled to close down some of their low-paying and costly oil fields, have been hit the hardest. Banks which have issued large loans to oil exporters are sustaining losses.

The attitude of American transnational oil corporations to the price slide is controversial. They certainly share the political objectives of the Administration and are obviously interested in a certain degree of price reduction. On the other hand, they aim to frustrate measures to save oil and replace it



with alternative sources of energy, make the world once again heavily dependent on oil, and eventually cause artificial oil shortages and inflate oil prices. As the U.S. business magazine Fortune put it on February 17, "for the most part, major oil companies are putting up a sanguine front ... in anticipation of the day, however distant, when oil may again be scarce." At the same time, as oil prices continue to fall, the transnationals are becoming increasingly worried about their profitable North Sea and Alaska oil fields. There is more and more talk in the Western press to the effect that with oil prices at their present low level it has become unprofitable to invest in cost-intensive prospecting and production, and that this will lead to a serious reduction in the oil output of Western states and heavier dependence on their part on OPEC towards the early nineties. Independent oil companies have taken a still more vigorous stand: they are demanding that the Administration should levy taxes on oil and oil products.

British ruling circles will not join forces with OPEC. The British government is convinced that the damage done to the country's economy by the slide in oil prices can be more than offset by the overall stimulus to economic growth arising from a cut in energy supply costs.

Unity Essential

The petroleum-exporting developing countries are coming increasingly to realize who is to blame for the oil price slide. In its February 18 issue, the Algerian paper El Moudjahid described it as "unprecedented economic aggression". Ecuador's La Hora wrote on February 6 that the oil price slide is an integral part of the imperialist world's general strategy, aimed at increasing the dependence of the developing countries and solving its own financial and economic problems at their expense.

The petroleum-exporting developing countries' attitudes to the slide in oil prices are by no means identical. The "price duel" with Britain was initiated by Saudi Arabia which, at the same time, seeks to have its partners and rivals in OPEC strictly observe the quotas agreed upon, weaken the radical wing and consolidate its own leading position in the organization. When assessing the actions of Saudi Arabia one should bear in mind that U.S. oil monopolies normally purchase up to four fifths of its oil export and that Sheikh Yamani, Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, usually coordinates his marketing policy with these monopolies. It is also to be taken into consideration that Saudi Arabia maintains close political and business links with the United States where the lion's share of its capital is invested.

After British oil production had reached its peak, American monopolies got hold of additional quantities of commodity oil owing to an increase in Saudi Arabia's oil output which, in turn, would have been impossible without a price slide. The Americans made a substantial profit out of refining this oil and marketing oil products. This suggests a coincidence of interest between Riyadh and Washington, with Saudi Arabia willy-nilly acting as an instrument of the U.S. ruling circles for pursuing their global objectives.

In any case, it is not without reason that Saudi oil policy is being increasingly bitterly criticized by other OPEC countries, especially the more radical ones.

The price slide left Mexico and Nigeria in a difficult position. President Miguel de la Madrid of Mexico called on the heads of the industrialized capitalist states to render his country urgent financial aid; otherwise it would have to proclaim a moratorium on the payment of its foreign debt. The U.S. and Britain made the granting of government and IMF credits to Nigeria conditional on the devaluation of the local monetary unit and other measures beneficial to creditors.

Having found themselves in similar plights, many of the petroleum-exporting developing countries are now tending to pool their efforts. This tendency has become still more pronounced following the OPEC statement to the effect that it was no longer able to stabilize the market or stop the price slide single-handed. Mexico, Angola, Egypt, Oman and Malaysia have shown readiness to engage in concerted action.

It was against this background that the 77th OPEC conference opened in Geneva on March 16, with the above-mentioned independent oil suppliers sending observers. The conference faced the difficult problem of agreeing upon a reduction in oil output with a view to stopping the price slide and bringing about a rise in petroleum prices in the long term. This has not been achieved so far. Business quarters and the general public in the petroleum-exporting developing countries realize that under present circumstances the OPEC members must show courage and readiness to make compromises in the common interest. After all, the petroleum issue is not the only one. The question is whether the developing countries prove able to protect their interests in their confrontation with neocolonialism. Their fate is in in their own hands.

■

Economic difficulties are sharpening the political struggle in this small Central American country

ROUGH WEATHER

From Our Special Correspondent
VLADIMIR DOLGOV

The name of the country has been variously explained. Some believe the Spanish conquistadors named it after the panama hat, because the luxuriant tree tops reminded them of the wide panamanian brim. One does not, in fact, see many of these trees today. Others maintain that the Indians named the isthmus Panama, which in their language means "abundance of fish."

What strikes the visitor today is not so much the abundance of fish or the sight of surviving "panama" trees, as the number of banks. Although the country is not large there are 123 of them, and only 13 are owned by national capital. Most are branches of big U.S., West European, Latin American and Japanese banking concerns. They established themselves here in the 1960s, attracted by the privileges the country offered bankers. No licence was required to engage in banking, nor were there any restrictions on the transfer of profits to other countries. Foreign investors were exempt from many of the taxes. In fact, there is no control over financial operations even now. Only the profits transferred from the country are registered.

The free commerce zone—the centre of international trade—is in the city of Colon on the Atlantic coast. Many trading firms have opened offices there. Next to every bank in the capital there are numerous shops—large and small. The impression is that there are more sellers than buyers.

The Panama Canal is a busy route that links two oceans. It is the country's breadwinner.

We arrived at Miraflores Lock at noon. The sun blazed mercilessly. But the heat did not prevent the helmeted workers from efficiently following orders, opening the gate to the chamber to allow another ocean liner to enter it. Today it takes a vessel an average of about eight hours to pass through the canal. Experts have estimated that the traffic capacity could be doubled if the channel were deepened, the locks widened and other technical improvements made.

National Flag Over the Canal

Driving along the embankment of the canal one cannot help but notice the Panamanian flag, with its blue, red and two white rectangles, flying on Mount Ancon and in many other places. The national flag was first hoisted as late as October 1, 1979, after the U.S.-Panamanian treaties signed by President James Carter and General Omar Torrijos, the Panamanian leader, in September 1977 were ratified. These documents put an end to the era of absolute U.S. control over the Canal Zone. At present the canal is managed by a commission made up of five U.S. representatives (including the chairman) and four Panamanians. Four years from now a Panamanian representative will preside over the board. And at the start of the 21st century the Panamanians are to take over control of the canal completely.

Until 1979 all profits from the commercial operation of the canal actually went to the United States, with Panama receiving no more than a few crumbs. In 1968 the Canal Zone was isolated from the city of Panama by a high wire fence and declared off limits for all Panamanians except the canal's employees. The people who worked in the Canal Zone formed a separate section of the population, known as the Zonianas. U.S. police cars patrolled not only the zone, but also the streets of the capital.

On May 2, 1958, students from Panama University performed a daring exploit. They hoisted 75 national flags in various parts of the zone. On January 9, 1964, they attempted to raise a flag in an area of the zone which actually jutted into the Panamanian capital. When the students stormed the gate to the zone and attempted to climb over the fence the U.S. police did not recoil from bloodshed. The street in which these events occurred is now called the Avenue of Martyrs.

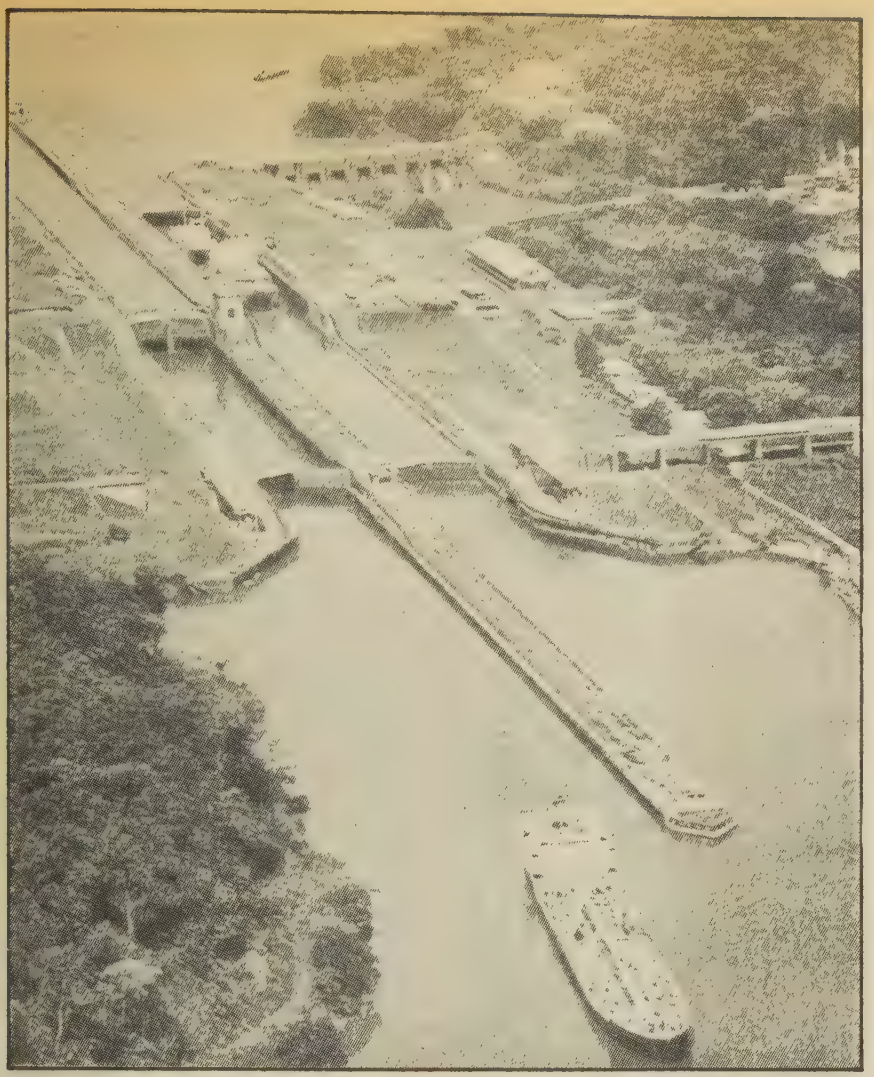
In October 1968 patriotic-minded officers of the National Guard led by General Omar Torrijos overthrew President Arias Madrid, a U.S. stooge. Later the general was often to reiterate: "I don't want to go down in history, I want to enter the Panama Canal Zone." However, his name has been recorded in the history of his country and all Latin America as leader of the revolutionary process in Panama. He saw it as his life's work to restore national sovereignty over the zone the U.S. had taken possession of. And in the end he achieved his objective.

The Struggle Continues

Moises Torrijos Herrera, brother of General Torrijos (who was killed in an air crash in 1981), a journalist and a public figure, is an adherent of his ideas. He received me on the terrace of his comfortable home. When the future of the canal was mentioned, he said:

"Although the treaties Torrijos and Carter signed are in force, it is necessary to carry on the struggle to get the United States to abide by every clause in them. The U.S. would resort to any trick to prevent the waterway that joins two oceans from coming under the jurisdiction of Panama, as provided for by the treaties. The process has been protracted till 2000. Another serious danger consists in the fact that people on the Right, opponents of Omar Torrijos, would like to regain the power they lost and nullify the positive achievements that have been secured for the country and the people."

And indeed Washington would stop at nothing to violate or change the terms of the treaties. The U.S. Congress



View of the Panama Canal.
TASS photo

unilaterally adopted a whole set of amendments to them. In some cases these amendments have altered the very meaning of the treaties. The United States regards the mixed commission charged with administering the canal as virtually its own agency. In keeping with an amendment to Article 3 of one of the treaties, the commission is to be set up under U.S. laws. As Fernando Manfredo, Panamanian deputy administrator of the canal, put it, the U.S. Secretary of Defence still controls the commission.

Here is another flagrant violation of the treaties: the Panamanian nominee for the office of administrator for the period from January 1, 1990, till the canal is placed wholly under the control of Panama shall be subject to approval by the U.S. Senate and his appointment shall be ratified by the U.S. President. In fact, the former Canal Zone is governed by U.S., and not Panamanian, law. The Panamanian pilots who are to replace their U.S. colleagues are still few in number—only 18 out of 248. All these factors cannot but create serious problems for the normal operation of the waterway.

The Panama Canal still forms an important component of the U.S. military-strategic infrastructure in Latin America. As before, the headquarters of the U.S. Southern Command are still located on its banks. The U.S. Southern Command has 10,000 U.S. servicemen under it. This is more than the total strength of Panama's national defence forces. The Pentagon needs the former Canal Zone as a base from which to direct troops to any area in Central America or the Caribbean to suppress national liberation movements. At the Caribe Hotel where I was staying I would meet—both early in the morning and towards evening—robust men in green uniform sporting U.S. Army labels. In the morning they were going to military installations or firing grounds, and in the evening they appeared in civvies.

As you travel through the former Canal Zone you frequently see large boards with notices in English and Spanish: U.S. Army Property. In the canal area there are still 77 U.S. military bases and installations. The notorious School of the Americas has been withdrawn from Fort Gulick on the Atlantic coast. However, the Inter-American Air Force Academy attended by 660-800 cadets from 12 Latin American countries, is still functioning. The school for operations in the selva trains up to 8,000 persons a year. There are other schools and courses, including those for training personnel for special units, such as the Green Berets.

What Torrijism Means

The work of Omar Torrijos in pursuit of his mission was of tremendous importance to the country and the people. When I met Moises Torrijos, I asked him to explain to me what Torrijism, the term used in Panama for General Omar Torrijos' ideas, meant.

"Torrijism," he said, "is above all nationalism in the positive sense of the word. Not chauvinism, but defence of Panama's national interests and primarily its sovereignty over the Canal Zone. Before the Torrijos government came to power [in 1968—**V.D.**] no cabinet had resolutely attempted to establish Panama's authority over the canal and its zone. They maintained that under the 1903 treaty it had been handed over to the U.S. for use in perpetuity.

"Torrijism also implies social justice. Before Omar Torrijos, Panama had no labour code. He managed to get the National Assembly to enact such a code. The working people are now able to conclude labour agreements with the entrepreneurs. In the past landlords could fix the rent arbitrarily. Under Torrijos a law on housing was enacted. This law provided for the level of the rent and incomes of houseowners. He also initiated the construction of inexpensive blocks of flats for low-income families.

"Furthermore, Torrijism means development. Torrijos declared war on the chronic economic crisis by increasing the output of various products, especially agricultural. Under him the country started to produce more food, whereas before, we had imported rice, maize and even salt, though we have an abundant supply of it ourselves. Today we produce staple foodstuffs ourselves and even export some foods, such as bananas, shrimps, lobsters and coffee. Under Torrijos Panama began to build up an economic infrastructure and to use the power of its rivers to generate electricity. As a result, the country produces 80 per cent of the electricity it needs.

"In the sphere of foreign policy Torrijism means upholding anti-imperialist positions, membership of the non-aligned movement and opposition to all foreign intervention in the internal affairs of any country.

"Regrettably," Moises Torrijos concluded, "after the death of General Omar Torrijos his successors have increasingly departed from his line. There has been a shift to the Right in all areas —ideology, politics and the economy. It is true that the Revolutionary Democratic Party Omar Torrijos created still exists. But, though there are many of his followers in it, there are also those who would prefer to consign his ideas to oblivion."

In October 1985 major changes took place in the party leadership. They reflect a bitter internal conflict. Berta Torrijos, the late general's sister, resigned from the post of party chairman, and Jorge Abadia Arias relinquished his post of general secretary. The party is now headed by five leaders representing various ideological trends.

Until recently Panama's economy exhibited relative stability in its development. To some extent this had a favourable impact on the public health and education systems. Infant mortality dropped, and illiteracy fell from 28 to 14 per cent. However, these improvements did not affect the entire population of more than two million. Very many people are still afflicted with poverty and unemployment. According to the magazine Dialogo Social, there are 180,000 fully and 125,000 partially unemployed people in the country. This figure accounts for over 14 per cent of the population as a whole, without excluding children and old people. No wonder statistics show that more than 50 per cent of families can barely make ends meet and one family in three is poverty-stricken.

I saw this in the port of Colon, where poverty leaps to the eye. You see people in rags roaming the streets and begging. Dozens of them while away the time on benches in parks and gardens. The slum area, which is called New Villa, as if to deride it, is a cluster of shacks made from cardboard boxes and crates. It is not surprising that crime flourishes, and to Colon's shame it is there that the crime rate is highest.

In the Political Arena

The difficult economic situation has inevitably aggravated class contradictions and affected the character of the internal political struggle. The time when Panamanians were united by the desire to wrest the Panama Canal from the U.S. and establish national sovereignty over it is past. Nor is there a universally recognized national leader like Omar Torrijos.

Although the country had an acting president, real power was in the hands of the commander of the National Guard. (In 1983 it was renamed the National Defence Force.) In 1984 the generals agreed to hold presidential elections. They were accordingly held in May of the same year. Many political parties took part in them. However, the major parties formed two blocs: the National Democratic Union in which Torrijos' Revolutionary Democratic Party, supported by the military, set the tune, and the Democratic Opposition Alliance, uniting Right-wing bourgeois parties. The latter's nominee was Arnulfo Arias Madrid, a zealous promoter of U.S. interests, the erstwhile president Omar Torrijos had overthrown. Arnulfo Arias Madrid and his friends fiercely attacked Torrijos' reforms. This platform did not enable him to return to the presidential palace. It was Nicolas Ardito Barletta, financier, former vice-president of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the nominee of the National Democratic Union, who won the elections, though with only a bare majority. When he ran for the presidency, he promised a "constructive approach" to the country's problems.

However, it soon transpired that his "constructive approach" ran against national interests. To repay the country's foreign debt of over $4 billion Barletta proposed the implementation of measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. In plain terms this amounted to the abandonment of the reforms, since the private sector was to play the key role with the public sector both in industry and agriculture no longer enjoying priority development. Provision was also made for the rescinding of the labour code.

Even the Legislative Assembly refused to take orders from the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and rejected their recommendations, because they infringed on Panama's national sovereignty. Persistent mass action finally caused Nicolas Barletta to resign in September 1985. Vice-President Eric Arturo Delvalle, leader of the numerically small Republican Party, took over the presidency. In its statement the Political Bureau of the People's Party of Panama (party of Panamanian Communists) pointed out:

"The President's resignation is the result of the universal rejection of his plan to give the transnational corporations complete control over the country, and of his attempt to place it at the mercy of the IMF and IBRD in order to repay the monstrous foreign debt. Barletta had to resign also because his anti-Panamanian measures could bring the social gains to naught and endanger the national resources and the nationalization of the canal."

Rightists on the Offensive

The political crisis has brought to light the contradictions between the various economic groups and political forces, between the military leaders and the civilian politicians. The circles eager to regain the power they lost in 1968 are making themselves increasingly heard. Indeed, they have launched a frontal assault on Torrijism. The bloc of Right-wing parties with the bourgeois association of professionals—doctors, lawyers, college instructors, merchants and other businessmen—has also joined in. The bloc is known as the Civilian National Coordination. There is a hidden danger to the democratic movement in that the bloc's leaders have advanced attractive slogans. I watched a demonstration of Civilists. They carried placards calling for the "democratization of society," the establishment of social justice and the elimination of corruption. The Civilists have directed their main attack at the armed forces and General A. Noriega, the commander-in-chief who succeeded Torrijos, holding them responsible for all the hardships suffered by the country.

The situation has grown so bad that some leaders have been threatened. More than that, there have been acts of political violence. In September 1985 the country was shocked by the murder of Hugo Spadafora, ex-Minister of Public Health. His decapitated body was found on Costa Rican territory near the Panamanian frontier. It was suggested that this outrageous murder could have been committed by the CIA to aggravate the political situation further. However that may be, it was the Right that took advantage of the crime. They laid it at the door of the armed forces in an attempt to cast aspersions on Torrijos' followers.

In this context the democrats are sparing no effort to rally all the healthy forces within the Panamanian nation on a Torrijist platform.

Panama—Managua

The trial of Indira Gandhi's assassins is over, but a government commission continues to probe the sinister circumstances of the case

ANATOMY OF THE MURDER PLOT

From Our Own Correspondent
LEONID ZHEGALOV

On January 22, 1986, during the final, 113th court sitting in New Delhi Judge Mahesh Chandra turned over the 262nd and final page of the indictment of the assassins of Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Sitting like the defendants in a bullet-proof glass cubicle, he read out the sentence. He had reached the conclusion, he said, that the investigation had established beyond any doubt that Beant Singh, killed at the scene of the crime, and Satwant Singh, 23, Kehar Singh, 54, and Balbir Singh, 45, had entered into a criminal conspiracy to kill Indira Gandhi and that in pursuit of that conspiracy, at 9:10 a.m. on October 31, 1984, Beant Singh and Satwant Singh, being on duty as security service officers, had shot Mrs Gandhi with a service revolver and an automatic carbine respectively, as a result of which she had died of fatal wounds. The defendants were sentenced to death.

On That October 31

Life at 1, Safdurjung Road, began as usual. Indira Gandhi rose at 7 a.m. and, after a brief toilet, sat down to a light breakfast. What was the business in hand? A recent pre-election tour of several states had shown that the newly established alliance of opposition parties was growing stronger. It was therefore necessary to galvanize her own party, the Indian National Congress (I). It was something of a paradox that she herself was indisputably popular with voters—but some of her party candidates were obviously trailing opposition. The list of candidates would have to be revised.

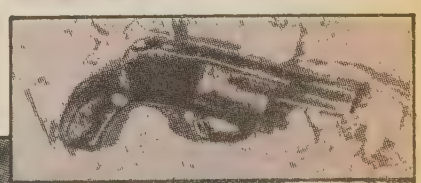
Furthermore, a few days previously she had been given a confidential report on the mood of the Sikhs after the army action six months before to clear the Sikh shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, of extremists. Some Sikhs believed, whether as a result of misapprehension or under the influence of hostile propaganda, that the government had defiled their religion. The head of the security service had recommended that Sikhs be removed from her personal bodyguard. But it was bad advice: what sort of example would the Prime Minister have set at a time when communal unity had to be forged?

There was a knock at the door. Her faithful personal attendant, Nath Ram, brought in a pile of morning newspapers. Her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, had always rebuked her for reading newspapers at breakfast. But what could one do? There are only 24 hours in a day. The situation in Punjab was troubled again. Outside support for the extremists was obviously growing. Zia ul-Haq was pledging friendship—but in reality conniving at the training of Sikh terrorists in Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan had let itself become involved in American strategic plans in Southern Asia. Washington was obviously inciting hostility in India's neighbours. That was what the Prime Minister was going to talk about in a TV interview scheduled for that morning.

Her personal secretary, M.L. Fotedar, phoned her to say that the TV crew had arrived and was waiting in the reception house on the grounds of her residence; they had already put up the lights. She asked Ram to fetch in a mirror and looked searchingly at her face, tired from her recent tour. It was 9:08 a.m.

Meanwhile, Beant Singh, a police sub-inspector from the security service at the Prime Minister's residence, came on duty. This was a piece of luck: his turn was in the afternoon but the simple-hearted Jai Narain, who was to do the morning stint, had believed that Beant's wife was coming to see him from Punjab in the afternoon and had agreed to a swap. And now Constable Satwant Singh, adjusting his carbine, was taking up his position opposite, on the other side of the concrete walkway from the residence to the reception house, although usually he was on duty in the outer security circle. Balbir Singh, the detail commander, had done a really good job, and even learned Indira Gandhi's morning schedule. Everything would happen as they had planned at their last meeting the night before: he, Beant, would be closest to Indira and

The murder weapons.



The spot where Indira Gandhi fell.

would shoot first, and Satwant would do the rest with a burst from his carbine. Balbir is a true Sikh, Beant thought, ready to do anything for the faith. A week previously, on October 24, Balbir had taken Beant and Satwant to a Sikh temple in the 4th sector of Rama Krishna Puram, a district in New Delhi, where they pledged for the last time to avenge the desecration of the Golden Temple. They also had with them Kehar Singh, an employee of the Directorate General of Supplies and another true Sikh. He had said: "The government calls our brothers in faith extremists and they were smoked out like animals from the Golden Temple. The government claims that it was they who desecrated our shrine. Do not believe it. It was Indira Gandhi who raised her hand against our sacred shrine. Is this not evidence of the suppression of the Sikhs? She must die!"

Recalling this, Beant pushed his hand into his belt, closer to the revolver holder. It was 9:08 a.m. . . .

The door of the residence opened and Indira Gandhi came out. She took a step forward, then stopped. Nath Ram, following on her heels, opened a sunshade: the sun already was beating down mercilessly. Rameshwar Dayal, Mrs Gandhi's personal bodyguard, came out next. Satwant Singh saw all this clearly from his post almost 100 metres away. Would Dayal go in front? He might obstruct the target. And what if Mrs Gandhi was wearing a bullet-proof vest? Hardly likely at this time of the day in her own residence.

Indira Gandhi had already covered half the distance between the two buildings and, passing Beant, smiled at him. Satwant, he did not know why, looked at his watch: 9:10 a.m. Beant drew out his revolver and pulled the trigger five times. A flock of birds, scared, took off from the plane trees. "What are you doing?" Mrs Gandhi cried, falling onto her right side. But her words were drowned in the stacatto burst of carbine fire as Satwant emptied 25 rounds into her prostrate form. He threw down his carbine. Security officers who had rushed to the scene seized both men and took them to the guardhouse. Beant tried to resist and snatched a carbine from one of the guards—but was immediately mown down in a burst of submachine-gun fire. Satwant, too, was wounded in the melee.

Meanwhile, the shock caused by the attack had subsided and witnesses of the tragedy tried to do what they thought best. Rameshwar Dayal, fighting the pain in his wounded left hip, gave orders that the Prime Minister's personal physician, K.P. Mathur, be summoned. The physician ran to the scene, felt for her pulse, then dropped her hand in desperation and started massaging the fatally wounded woman in an attempt at artificial respiration. Rajiv Gandhi's wife Sonia rushed out of the residence and immediately understood from the look on the physician's face that the case was hopeless. The duty car could not come right up to the scene so guards and aides had to carry Indira Gandhi's motionless form across the lawn. She was laid in the back seat and the car, its siren blaring, sped towards the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences. It was 9:21 a.m.

At Sonia's request, one of the Prime Minister's aides began to phone Bombay, trying to locate Rajiv Gandhi, at the time a leader of the Indian National Congress (I). The Ministry of External Affairs was told to contact President Zail Singh, who was abroad.

It was 9:46 a.m. when surgeons began removing bullets in the operating theatre on the second floor of the Institute of Medical Sciences. A heart-lung machine was switched on and a blood transfusion given.

At 10 a.m. the national radio broadcast the news of the assassination attempt. The announcer said that Indira Gandhi was unconscious.

Clinical death was recorded at 10:14 a.m. Surgeons continued to try for another half an hour to revive the deceased.

Cocking the Trigger

Judge Mahesh Chandra did neither more nor less than was prescribed by traditional Indian legal practice, exposing the mechanism of the crime, so to speak, and meting out punishment to the guilty parties. It was not his task to prove that the case did not rest with the four fanatics who had perpetrated the crime alone but was to be seen in the context of a broader conspiracy of which some of the threads led outside the country. However, there is indirect evidence indicating that this is the case. That was why, almost as soon as the investigation began, an official government commission headed by a prominent lawyer, Supreme Court Judge M.P. Thakkar, was set up. The commission, which is still in session, has set out to examine the circumstances of the Gandhi assassination in a broader context, including the possible involvement of external forces. Some of the evidence collected by the commission has become available to Indian journalists. Indian newspapers have written about other, less immediate circumstances of the crime. The totality of available evidence makes it possible today to reconstruct the conspiracy to remove Indira Gandhi from the political scene by violent means.

To begin with, Indira Gandhi herself had not ruled out the possibility that she could fall victim to a conspiracy of external imperialist forces and their stooges inside the country. This was not the paranoia of a person who fears for her life but a sober evaluation of political realities. Indeed, the Indian leader was pursuing a consistent anti-imperialist course on the international scene and pressing on with progressive reforms at home. None of this could have helped but incite the wrath of imperialist forces and domestic reaction. Once Indira Gandhi told Fidel Castro in a private conversation: "What they have done to Allende, they also wish to do it to me, here. There are people who, linked to the same external forces that acted in Chile, would like to eliminate me."

They were waiting for their chance—and it came after the Gandhi government had had to make a difficult choice in June 1984. Regular troops were dispatched against the Sikh extremist separatists who had dug in at the Golden Temple in Amritsar: their operation, code-named Blue Star, was intended to put an end to the rampage of terrorists in Punjab. The overseas Sikh separatist organizations, especially those in the United States, Britain and Canada, openly took to the warpath. They were supported by the U.S. authorities, whose motives were far from philanthropic. The separatist leaders had long wanted the secession of Punjab from India and the establishment of "Khalistan," a buffer state that would prevent "Soviet infiltration" in Southern Asia and fight "the rise of Left-wing forces" in India. So the U.S. politicians set their sights on establishing a pro-imperialist puppet state in the Indian subcontinent. But that was a long-term strategic objective, while the immediate problem of who was to be supported was clear: the Sikh fanatics seemed the obvious choice. Frank Camper, as we know today, was training mercenaries in Alabama, among them Sikhs, with the knowledge of the Central Intelligence Agency. It was at that time that Indira Gandhi received a confidential letter from Satish Chandra, an Indian patriot living in the United States, who was exploring the relationship between Sikh separatists and the CIA. He warned Indira Gandhi that a conspiracy was being hatched against her.

A European contact between Sikh separatists in the U.S. and India was Harinder Singh, a former member of staff at the Indian embassy in Norway, who had resigned after Operation Blue Star

and settled in Oslo. Harinder Singh and Beant Singh, Gandhi's bodyguard, are related by marriage. This circumstance did not escape the attention of the Sikh extremists in the U.S. nor, probably, their paymasters in Washington. As long ago as June 1983, when the situation in Punjab was already tense, Beant had a meeting with Harinder during Indira Gandhi's visit to Oslo. At the time Beant got $100,000 in "advance." A few months later Harinder rushed to London when Indira Gandhi was visiting there and had another meeting with Beant. That was how the conspiracy began to take shape.

Unholy Tandem

Meanwhile, on CIA instructions, a secret paper was prepared in the U.S. on options for the development of the situation in India in the event of the violent removal of Indira Gandhi from the political scene. It subsequently became known as the Hardgrave Report from the name of its author. The paper did not doubt the future violent removal but was merely concerned about the timing: was it to take place before or after the forthcoming parliamentary elections? The decision seemed to be before.

Not long before the assassination Satwant Singh asked for a short leave to see relatives in Punjab. It later transpired, however, that Satwant had been absent from home for a few days. He is believed to have crossed the border into Pakistan to meet the masterminds of the conspiracy, including the above-mentioned Harinder Singh. Having made certain that Beant and Satwant were ready to go through with the job, Harinder gave them the names of other conspirators, among them those of Balbir Singh, a senior officer in the outer security service of the Prime Minister's residence, and Kehar Singh, an employee of the Directorate General of Supplies. Their task was to coordinate the execution of the plot. It cannot be ruled out, moreover, that Balbir, who was entitled to carry weapons on the grounds of Mrs Gandhi's residence, was to eliminate Beant and Satwant after the assassination and thus get rid of witnesses.

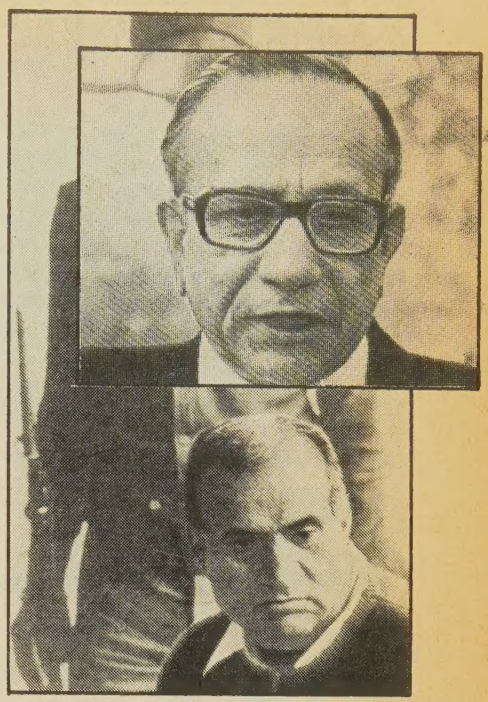
A week previously Balbir and Kehar made certain of the commitment of the prospective assassins when they made them swear an oath of allegiance at the Sikh temple in New Delhi.

The day before the assassination, strike group 109 of the U.S. Navy, including the aircraft carrier Enterprise and several support ships, usually deployed near the Persian Gulf, moved closer to India's western borders. Indian monitoring services noted that the ships observed complete radio silence as they made the manoeuvre: transmitters went on the air only on November 3, three days after the assassination. What was the purpose of the manoeuvre? Was it related to the prediction of the Hardgrave Report that India would be plunged into chaos following the violent removal of Indira Gandhi and that neighbouring Pakistan could be provoked into "impulsive action"? Perhaps the Enterprise was meant to support that "action"? In any case there is a precedent: during the Indo-Pakistani conflict in December 1971 a U.S. naval squadron entered the Bay of Bengal.

Now back to our story. Another sensation hit the country after the verdict had been given at the assassination trial: in late January 1986 the indictment of Indian national Rama Swarup, arrested earlier on charges of spying, was made public. The document says he was an agent of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and was known to the CIA's New Delhi resident officers as agent No. 72. The indictment says that Swarup "was vitally interested in the progress of the Thakkar Commission." The investigation has drawn this conclusion from the fact that a search at Swarup's home revealed, among other evidence, a copy of Satish Chandra's confidential letter to Indira Gandhi which was made available to the commission.

What was the reason for that "interest"? Indian observers say that it is the commission's concern to identify the part played by outside forces in the conspiracy.

It is worth noting that Swarup kept the copy of the letter in a file marked "For P.N. Lekhi." The name is familiar. First, it is mentioned in the indictment of Rama Swarup: Lekhi was a source of information. Second, Lekhi defended Satwant Singh at the trial of the assassins of Indira Gandhi. The CIA therefore used the Swarup-Lekhi tandem during the trial: one obtained information from the Thakkar Commission to inform the CIA promptly of the possible exposure of its activities, and the other did what he could to suppress evidence against outside accomplices to the crime while secretly keeping counsel with them. The indictment says, for instance, that Swarup passed 48,000 rupees on to Lekhi from the Americans so that he could go to Geneva in July 1985, allegedly on business associated with the trial of the Gandhi assassins. There, Indian journalists learned, Lekhi had a meeting with one Armakora, a U.S. national. The subject of their conversation is not yet known but, on his return to New Delhi, Lekhi told the court the appalling story that the assassination of Mrs Gandhi was a consequence of family discord. . . .



CIA tandem. The American agents P.N. Lekhi, who was defence counsel for one of the assassins, and Rama Swarup, who was the CIA's eyes and ears during the investigation of the crime.

Photos from India Today

The trial of the Gandhi assassins is over—but the case is not closed. The Thakkar Commission continues its work, and it is hoped in the Indian capital that more evidence will be brought to light. In any event the Hindustan Times reported in late February that the commission has already concluded that the crime perpetrated on October 31, 1984, was the result of a carefuly planned conspiracy of Sikh extremists operating in India and their accomplices outside the country.

New Delhi

TAKING UP A POINT

The 27th Congress of the Soviet Communists mentioned the need to convene a world congress on economic security. And if I am not mistaken, one month before the congress the Soviet government submitted a memorandum on international economic security to the U.N. Secretary-General. What explains such keen interest in this problem on the part of the Soviet Union? And one other thing—would not the Soviet initiatives obstruct efforts by developing countries to establish a new international economic order?

Carlos GONZALEZ
Mexico City, Mexico

NIKOLAI PETROV, D.Sc. (Econ.), replies:

Dear Mr Gonzalez,

As everyone knows, international economic security is an important, indeed essential, ingredient of international security as a whole. Moreover, efforts for peace and for an end to the arms race are closely bound up with the struggle to improve and restructure international economic relations.

In the past few years in interstate economic relations the imperialist powers have been flagrantly trying to follow practices that are at odds with U.N. principles, such as the unilateral cancellation of major economic treaties and agreements; trade, credit and technological blockades of individual countries that do not see eye to eye with Washington, for purposes of political pressure; and discrimination in trade, scientific and technological contacts. All this gives cause for concern, the more so as efforts within the United Nations to improve international trade, economic, currency and financial relations have failed to produce tangible results.

The relevant programme documents adopted by the U.N., such as the Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States and the Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, are not being implemented either; moreover, their practicability is being called in question and attempts are being made to shelve them indefinitely.

It must be apparent that in the past few years the international economic order, far from becoming fairer to developing nations, has further deteriorated. Evidence of this is provided, inter alia, by the onerous annual payments the developing countries have to make to transnational monopoly capital on their debts, which have reached one trillion dollars. These payments have grown considerably since the early 1970s. Between 1973 and 1983, they rose from 16 to 96 billion dollars, consuming a growing share of the developing countries' export revenues.

In Latin America and the Caribbean U.S. monopolies have in the past decade earned in profits eight times as much as they have invested. Is this conducive to economic and political stability in the region?

The lack of progress in improving international economic relations is even more evident against the background of the runaway arms race and increasing aggressiveness in the foreign policy of the United States and other leading NATO countries.

It is to block these adverse tendencies that the Soviet Union has, through the United Nations, addressed all countries with the proposal to take urgent action to guarantee international economic security as an integral part of international security in general.

You may ask: what is meant by "international economic security"? For the moment I can answer this question only in general terms because the specific stipulations of an accord on international economic security can and must be worked out in international negotiations, notably in the course of preparations for a world congress on problems of economic security, proposed by the 27th CPSU Congress.

But we can say even now that the very concept of international economic security presupposes, first and foremost, the renunciation of the use or threat of force, respect for the legitimate economic interests of states, and firm guarantees that these interests will not be violated. Interstate relations must be free of arbitrariness and such unlawful actions as embargoes, boycotts, trade, credit and technological blockades and the misuse of economic contacts for blackmail and political pressure.

Furthermore, the stabilization of the overall economic, financial and currency situation and the implementation of the appropriate U.N. resolutions—urged by the Soviet Union—constitute a major precondition for international economic security. Ways should be devised of settling the problem of indebtedness fairly and rapidly.

It is also our belief that if the arms race is effectively ended on earth and prevented from spilling over into outer space, overall security will be strengthened and, moreover, mankind will benefit materially. If, for example, the proposal, now well known, formulated by CPSU General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, on eliminating weapons of mass destruction by the year 2000 is implemented, huge resources will be released with which to improve living standards the world over.

It is beyond doubt that an end to the arms race and substantial cuts in military spending worldwide constitute the most realistic and effective means of providing material resources to resolve such urgent problems as the economic backwardness of vast regions and widespread hunger, poverty, disease and illiteracy.

So it must be apparent that the Soviet proposal on the need to reach accord on international economic security conforms to the vital interests of peoples the world over.

■

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MOSCOW IS WAITING FOR YOU

GDANSK

I met little Eliszka as she was climbing up the steps, blissfully confident that the beautiful world around her had always existed and would go on existing forever.

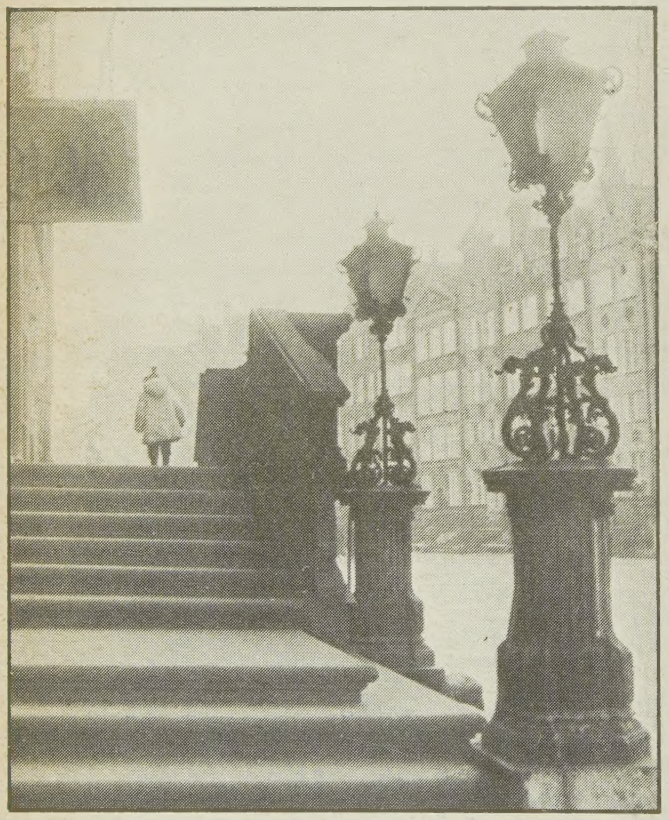
The commander of the German battleship Schleswig-Holstein thought differently. The artillery shell fired from that battleship on September 1, 1939, determined the fate and also the place of this city in history: the explosion that thundered on the Baltic coast 30 kilometres from here marked the beginning of World War II.

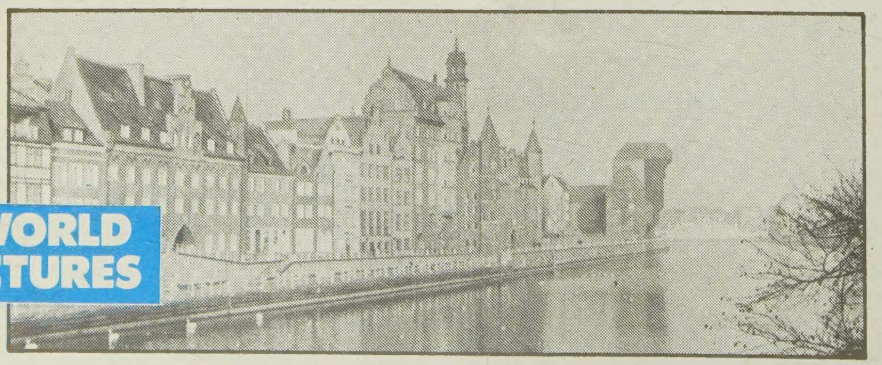
And the city ceased to exist. . . .

Gdansk was first destroyed in the year 1308. It happened to lie in the path of the Teutonic Order which had put the Baltic to the fire and sword. The crusaders wiped out the population and burned down the city. The sea brought it back to life. Gdansk, reunited with Poland in the 15th century, became one of the biggest ports in the Baltic. That curious tower at the end of the embankment is a 14th-century portal crane which still remembers 40-cannon Portuguese carracks and Venetian galleons. Gdansk grew and prospered for four centuries, its beauty enhanced by the rich baroque and elegant renaissance architecture that lasted until our own century.

And now it was destroyed once again.

By the end of the war Gdansk was reduced to a heap of ruins, undistinguishable from the ruins of Warsaw, Stalingrad, Minsk and hundreds of other towns razed by the war. Gdansk today is a miracle wrought by human hands, an achievement of the modern art of restoration of architectural monuments. Its walls, its steps, its street lamps were rebuilt according to surviving plans and documents. The layout of the town, the houses, the frescoes and ceramics all have been fully restored.





And on the spot where the first shells of World War II exploded there now stand a commercial port and what is the biggest shipbuilding wharf in People's Poland and one of the biggest in the world.

The battleship Schleswig-Holstein was sunk in 1945. A chunk of its steel plating was brought ashore and, with an inscription saying what happened here in the mid-20th century, became a monument.

Eliszka promised me that when she grows up and reads the inscription—and that will be in the 21st century—she will alter it to read: "the second, and last, world war."

That is how it should be. And will be.

B. KOZLOV

Photos by author

THE WORLD IN PICTURES